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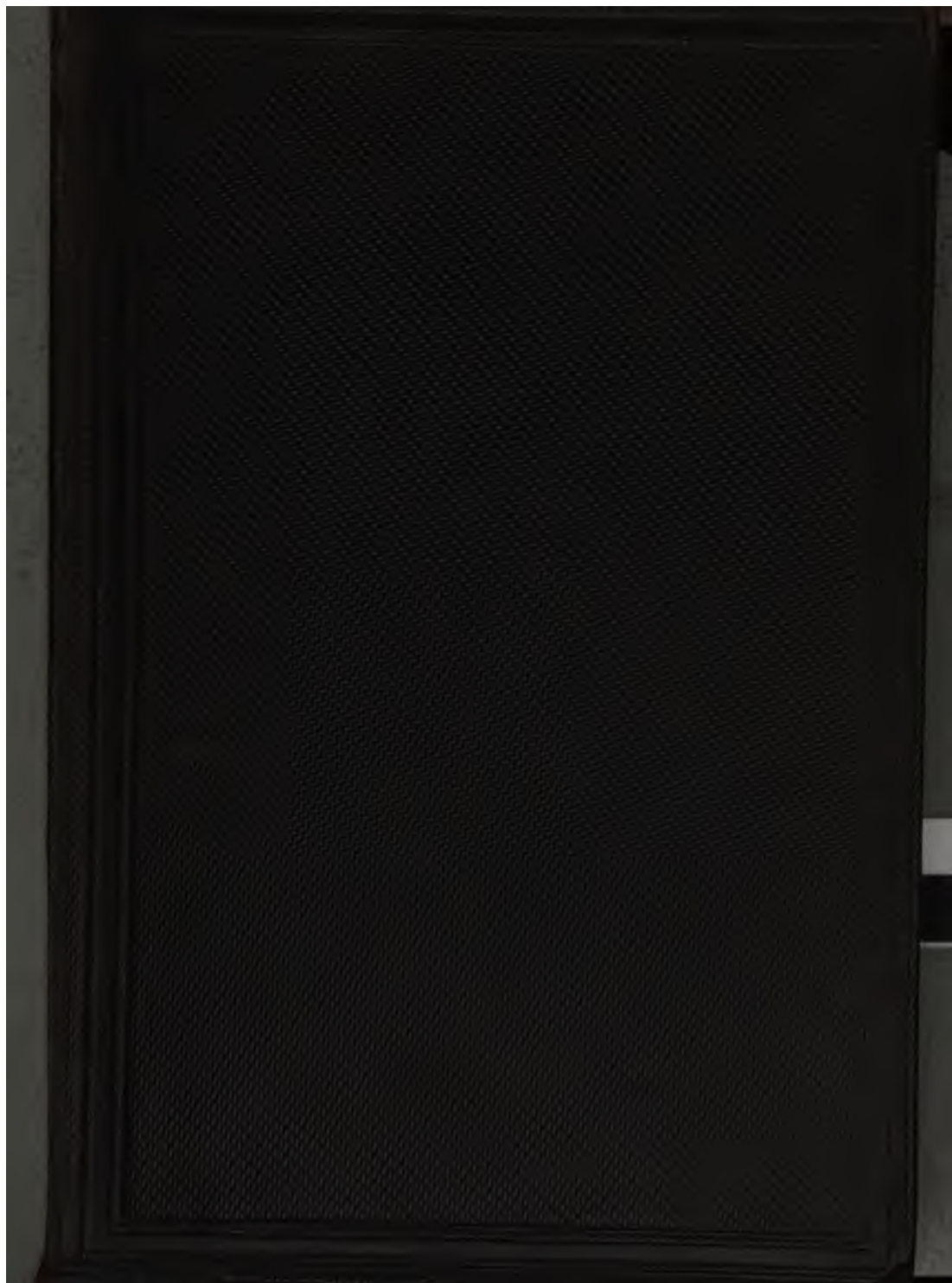
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**EXPOSITORY SERMONS
ON THE EPISTLES**

FOR THE

SUNDAYS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.



EXPOSITORY SERMONS
ON THE EPISTLES
FOR THE
SUNDAYS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

*PREACHED TO VARIOUS
ENGLISH CONGREGATIONS IN INDIA.*

BY
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VOLUME II.

Cambridge and London.
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1864.

100. g. 32.

Cambridge:
PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A.
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.



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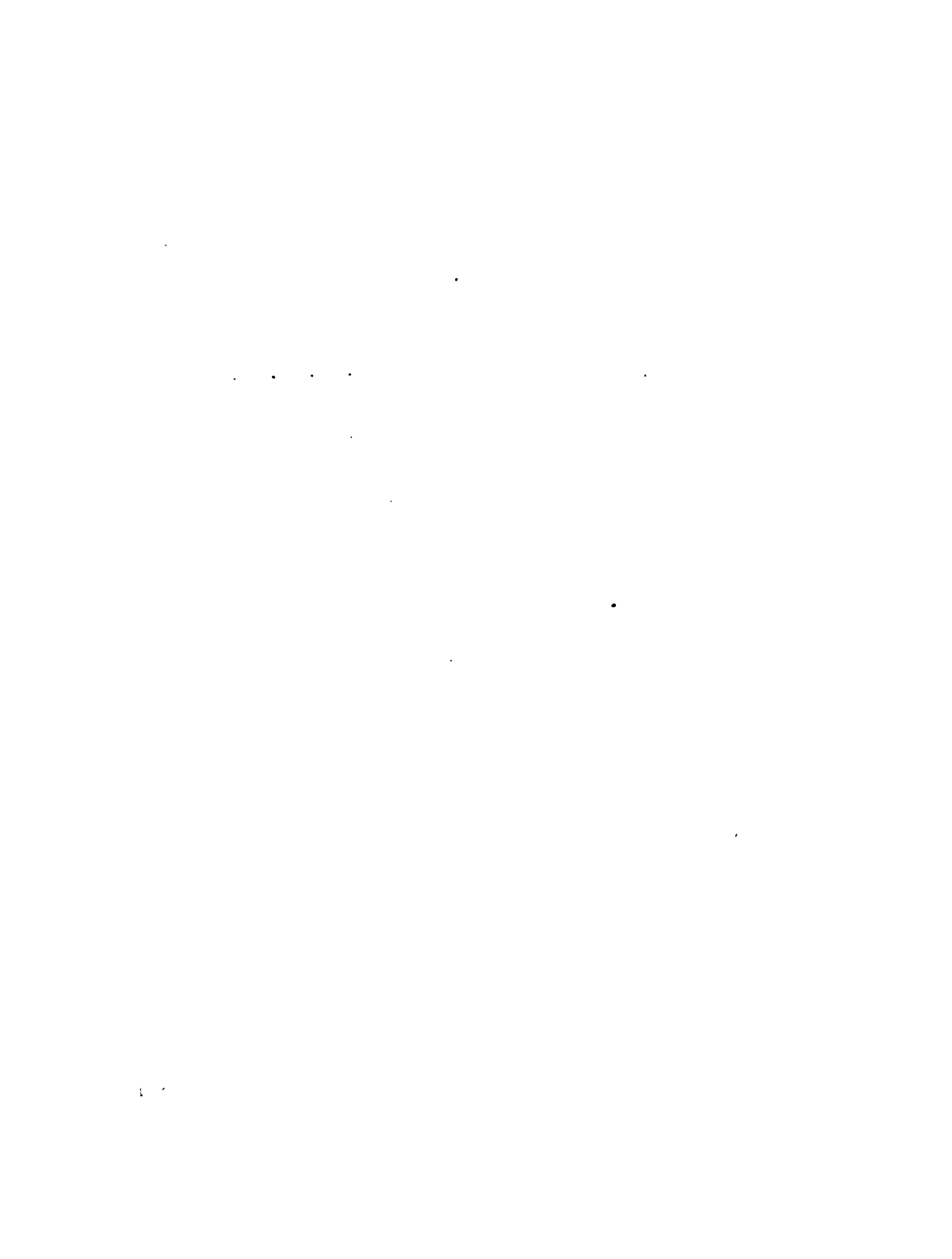
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SERMONS ON THE EPISTLES.

XXVII. CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

I PET. II. 16, 17.

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.

THERE is some doubt as to the connection of these two verses. Commonly they are separated by a full stop, and the 16th verse is read as if it formed one sentence with the 15th: *For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, as free and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.* Any one, however, who can read the New Testament in the language in which it was written, will see that though this is very clear and easy as the words stand in the English translation, it is by no means clear and easy as they stand in the original, and that the construction there rather suggests the transfer of the full stop from the end of

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XXVII.

Connection
of the two
verses of
the text.

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the 16th to the end of the 15th verse, and the union of the 16th and 17th into one continuous sentence. *For so is the will of God, that with welldoing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God, honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.* Obviously I cannot enter into the grammatical reasons for this, but I can point out the accurate knowledge of our human weaknesses, and very striking instruction, which are involved in the construction just suggested. The ordinary notion of liberty is the power of doing what we like ; and in vulgar minds there is added to this a coarse levelling independence, which desires to see all persons and conditions dragged down to one low platform. With the freedom which is pleasing to men of such a character, all reverence for age, and all respect for rank or merit or attainments, are regarded as incompatible, and the duty of honouring all men according to their just claims is regarded as a proof of a narrow and slavish disposition, and a want of proper self-respect. Now the connection which seems to exist between the two verses of my text furnishes the apostolical censure on this contemptible spirit. Such feelings are declared to be no part of Christian freedom. Christians are no doubt to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free* ; but order and mutual subordination, and the rendering of *honour to whom honour is due*, are essential principles of that

Gal. v. 1.

Rom. xiii.
7.

liberty. In Christ's kingdom we are indeed all spiritually equal, all can claim the same privileges, the same blessings, the same right of access to the Father; for we are all alike members of a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people*; and the only differences between us in God's sight are such as arise from our various growth in grace, and the closeness of our communion with Christ. But at the same time we form, not an anarchical rabble, but a duly regulated commonwealth. Christ's reign is the type of harmony and order, and God has given us *the spirit of power, and love, and sober-* 2 Tim. i. 7 (as translated in the Service for the Consecration of Bishops). Rom. xiii. 1.
ness. The claims of age, and station and dignity, are all recognized, because all *ordained by God*, and it is through the very consciousness of our Christian freedom, and of our common rights and privileges as God's redeemed children, that we acknowledge such claims upon our respect without any humiliation. Therefore, says the Apostle, because you are free, and know in what true freedom consists, you will not use your freedom as a veil for evil intentions, but will cheerfully give honour to all men, according to their several rights, either as citizens of an earthly empire, or of the church of God. Such I believe to be the connection of thought in the text, whether we press this grammatical construction or not. For, even if the common view is correct, which unites the 15th and 16th verses, rather than the 16th and 17th, still the juxtaposition of the two latter will teach us (though with less marked

SERMON distinctness) the same lesson, that it is an essential
XXVII. part of Christian freedom to *honour all men, to love the brotherhood, to fear God, and to honour the king.*

State of the Church in the apostolic age. 2. There is reason to believe that such precepts as these, and others which we shall presently find in to-day's epistle, were greatly needed by those to whom St Peter wrote. We are apt to fancy that all the evils which now defile the Church of Christ are the result of degeneracy and a worldly spirit; we look back to its earliest age, the time of persecution and martyrdom and heroic self-devotion, with the dream that its people were *all righteous*, and that in the days of their first triumphs, *when the Almighty scattered kings for their sake, then were they as white as snow in Salmon.* But the time of purity predicted by the prophets is yet to come. No one can read the epistles without perceiving that the disciples of the first century caused no less anxiety to the Apostles from their imperfect morality, than our own Hindu converts sometimes occasion to the missionaries who watch over them now. It was necessary to warn the early Christians against sensual sin, and falsehood, and bitterness, and unbridled license. We shall not wonder that such exhortations were needed then, or that they are sometimes needed now, when we consider how mighty is the change from heathenism to Christianity, what are the vices from which a heathen must be reclaimed, how wholly new are the principles set before him, how great must be the power

Is. lx. 21.

Ps. lxxviii.

^{14.}
 (Prayer-
 Book.)

of the temptations, the habits, the pollutions of an impure boyhood, how degrading the associations of idolatry, which he professes indeed to have left behind him, but which still pursue him in his new life. To these causes of disappointment, common to all ages of missionary labour, must be added one peculiar to the apostolic age. Men's minds at that time were every where expecting some tremendous political convulsion. Neither Jews nor Jewish converts could entirely divest themselves of the belief that the Messiah would erect a temporal throne at Jerusalem on the ruins of the Roman empire. It was an age of wild schemes, frantic hopes, excitement, and disorder. Every where it was plain that *old things were passing away, and all things becoming new.* The fabric of the existing society was tottering to its ruin. All Christians were compelled in some degree to separate themselves from the world around them, since heathenism was interwoven with business, with pleasure, with loyalty to the sovereign, with the sanctity of home, with art, with government, with legal proceedings, with every relation of life. Their necessary abstinence from many social meetings and duties of citizenship involved them in suspicion, and was probably one cause amongst others why they were pronounced by the great historian of the time to be the "detestation of the human race." But besides this it is probable that sometimes there were grounds for such suspicion, that some desperate men, falsely called Christians, shewed

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XXVII.

See Acts
v. 36, 37.
xvi. 38.
Matt. xxiv.
24. Rom.
xiii. 1 ff.
2 Thess. ii.
1, 2, &c.
2 Cor. v.
17.

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XXVII.

themselves disloyal to the institutions of the empire, perhaps were concerned in political disorder, and had joined the Church merely with the vague hope that in the crisis which was surely approaching they would rise to that worldly grandeur and power of reckless enjoyment which was their only aim. Such excesses must be expected in times of religious change. They appeared again on the surface at the next great epoch in the history of the Church, when Europe was convulsed by the Reformation, and the history of the Westphalian Anabaptists, which we accurately know, may furnish us with the means of picturing to ourselves the wild theories and extravagant license prevalent in an age, of which we can only conjecture the true condition from the hints scattered up and down the writings of the Apostles. At all events, in the passage to which the Church calls our attention to-day, St Peter thinks it necessary to warn his readers against bringing their faith into discredit by their misconduct, and especially against two great hindrances to Christian freedom, (i) the lusts of the flesh, and (ii) disobedience to constituted authority. Let us first listen to his exhortations, and then apply them to our own circumstances.

1 Pet. ii.
11.
*Para-
phrase of
the epistle.*

3. *Dearly beloved*, says the Apostle (and we should notice how tenderly and affectionately he administers his reproofs), *I exhort you, as sojourners, and strangers, as citizens of a better country than this, abstain from fleshly lusts, since they war against*

the soul, and enslave it and ruin it: having your SERMON
XXVII.
behaviour among the Gentiles seemly, that whereas ver. 12.
they are in the habit of speaking against you as evil-
doers, they may, on the ground of your good works,
being eyewitnesses of them, glorify God by accepting
His salvation in the day when He visits them with
His offers of grace and mercy. Submit yourselves to ver. 13.
every human ordinance for Christ's sake (a reason
which of course involves the exception of any hu-
man ordinances which are contrary to Christ's com-
mands); whether it be to the Emperor of Rome, as
the supreme head of the state, or to governors of ver. 14.
provinces as to men sent by him from time to time
for the punishment of evildoers, and the reward of
welldoers. For so is the will of God, that by doing ver. 15.
good you put to silence the ignorance of the foolish
men who speak against you as doers of evil. It is
true that you are free men in Christ Jesus, but re-
member what are the conditions and true character
of Christian freedom. It means emancipation not
from the rule of law and order, but from the bondage
of lust and pride. And therefore as truly free, and ver. 16.
not as men using freedom as a veil for evil purposes,
give honour to every man according to his due, love
all members of the Christian brotherhood, fear God,
honour your sovereign. "A precious cluster of di-
vine precepts," says Leighton, in commenting on
these four simple but most comprehensive rules, "a
constellation of very bright stars near together.
These words have very briefly, and yet not obscured

SERMON XXVII. by briefness, but withal very plainly, the sum of our duty towards God and men: to men both in general, *Honour all men*: and in special relations; in their Christian or religious relation, *Love the brotherhood*; and in a chief civil relation, *honour the king*. And our whole duty to God, comprised under the name of His *fear*, is set in the middle between these, as the common spring of all duty to men, and of all due observance of it, and the sovereign rule by which it is to be regulated."

Day of visitation. 4. There is, I think, only one expression in this passage which needs any further explanation. *The day of visitation*, in which the Apostle hopes that men who were then maligning the Christians would be won over to glorify God by the sight of their good works, means the day when the Gospel should be fully preached to them, when God should visit them with the offer of salvation. This is plain from our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem, in which the words, *thou knewest not the time of thy visitation*, are identical with *if thou hadst known the things which pertain to thy peace*; from the triumphant thanksgiving of Zacharias, because *the day-spring from on high hath visited us*; and from the announcement of St James at the council of Jerusalem that *God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name*. And in accordance with this apostolic exhortation, brethren, we Englishmen in this country, by the persuasive evidence of our good works, our consistent Christian lives, and our *faith working by*

Luke xix.
44.

Luke i. 78.
Cf. verse
68.

Acts xv.
14.

love, ought to win over willing congregations of Hindus and Mohammedans in this present day of SERMON XXVII.
their visitation, to the Church of Christ.

5. Turning now from the consideration of this passage in its connection with those *who walked disorderly* in St Peter's time, and applying it to the temptations of Christians in all times, and therefore to our own, we see that we are here warned against two great enemies of our souls, which are ever seeking to bring us into bondage, and to substitute for the true Christian liberty, the fancied freedom but real slavery of self-indulgence. These two enemies are (i) the lust of the flesh, and (ii) pride. Our own consciences will tell us that they are not enemies whose hostility is limited to persons placed in particular circumstances, or to one particular period of Christian history, but that they make war upon all classes at all times. One proof of their universal enmity to Christ's servants is that they are two of the temptations through which the devil assailed Christ Himself. His first solicitation, *if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread*, was a temptation through the lusts of the flesh. His second attack, *if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways*, was a temptation through the pride of the spirit. It well becomes us then to take heed against snares so subtle that they were chosen by the great Enemy for his own evil purposes, and at the same time if

Two enemies of our freedom.

2 Thess. iii. 6, 11.

Matt. iv. 3, 6.

SERMON
XXVII. we tremble at our own experience and recollection of their power, we shall be comforted by the thought
Heb. ii. 18. of One who *in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted by these very inclinations, is able to succour them that are tempted.*

Selfishness. i. The first of the two enemies which seeks to enslave us, and to persuade us to use our Christian liberty as a veil for evil purposes, is the lust of the flesh. We must not give too narrow an interpretation to this phrase, or limit it merely to sensual sins. Doubtless it includes these as the very most destructive of all the weapons by which Satan wars upon our souls. We know the fatal effects of such wicked habits, of intemperance, for example, and of sensual sin of a yet worse kind. We know how they degrade and defile their victims, how purity, and gentleness, and consideration for others, and thoughtfulness, and communion with God are driven from the heart over which they exercise their baneful mastery, and how they fetter it in the inextricable net and adamantine chains of evil habits, so that "it cannot at all perform any good, can neither pray, nor hear, nor read the word aright, but is disjointed and disabled for holy things¹." But *the flesh* in Scripture includes far more than these obvious sins which we commonly associate with that expression. St Paul tells us that the
Gal. v. 19 *works of the flesh* are not only *uncleanness and lasciviousness*, not only *drunkenness and revellings*, but

¹ Leighton.

also *hatred, variance, envy, wrath, and strife*. Substituting a familiar modern word for this old Scriptural expression, we may say that the lust of the flesh includes selfishness of every kind, whether it is shewn in the coarser and more vulgar forms of bodily indulgence, or in soft and luxurious living, or again in exalting ourselves, and seeking our own advantage without any thought of our brethren. I am quite sure that there is no one of this congregation who will not confess how terrible is the power of this great master vice of selfishness, how painfully he has experienced in some form or other the strength and subtlety of its assaults, how deep is his need of attending to the Apostle's warning words, *abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul*.

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ii. The second enemy which seeks to destroy *Pride*. our souls is pride. In the passage before us, St Peter speaks more particularly of that independence, falsely so called, which persuades us that it is derogatory to our fancied dignity to acknowledge any superior to ourselves. But it is plain that the root of this rebellious spirit is merely pride. For those who are unwilling to look up to any one as above them, are by no means reluctant to look down on those whom they conceive to be below them, and thus pride is akin to selfishness, being in fact the more spiritual form of the same evil. Sometimes a man shews his pride by refusing honour to those who are really his superiors, or again, by treating with contempt and insolence those whom he fancies to be his in-

SERMON
XXVII.

feriors. Sometimes this bad spirit displays itself in the odious forms of vanity and personal conceit, in an absurd or self-satisfied estimate of our own gifts and powers, in a complacent comparison of ourselves with those around us. But whatever be the form which pride assumes, its tendency is to bring us into slavery, to bind us fast in the misery and ruin of self-love, to keep us from breathing the pure and wholesome air, strengthening and exhilarating like the mountain breeze, of kindness, and brotherly love, and activity in serving God. Pride and vanity shut us up in ourselves, and confine us to our own narrow circle of prejudices and private interests; but from humility flow all other Christian graces, since it is not till we are conscious of our own manifold infirmities, that we can admire what is truly great, and obey the call to *give our hearts* to God.

*Means of
deliver-
ance.*

6. Selfishness and pride then are here set before us as the two great enemies which *war against the soul*, and are ever seeking to bring it into bondage. And now how are we to be delivered from their fetters or from their assaults? Brethren, the true reason why we remain slaves to these passions, in some one or more of their various manifestations, is that we are still strangers to the love of God. It is only in Christ that we can find safety or deliverance.

Joh. viii.
34—36.

Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin, and the servant abideth not in the house of God: such blessing is not reserved for the captive and the bondsman. But if the Son shall make you free, then

are ye free indeed. If you will come to God through Christ, with the surrender of yourselves to His most holy will, there will be no more self-satisfaction, no unhallowed independence, no boasting of one above another, no hatred and variance and envy and self-seeking, no base service to divers lusts and pleasures, which destroy all Christian fellowship, and shut our hearts from the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. Christ alone can restore us to freedom, He alone can teach us that as *strangers and pilgrims* upon earth, we are called to higher and purer pleasures than can be found in the gratification of a fallen nature, in ministering to the wants of a perishing body, or in the indulgence of an imaginary grandeur and self-esteem, which in a very few years must have past away for ever. Seek then for true freedom in forgetting yourselves and remembering Him, think of the witness borne by His life and death against all self-seeking and self-exaltation: and learning to see all things and all persons no longer through the mists of pride and selfishness, but in the pure heavenly radiance of His Gospel, let each offer up to Him the thoughtful prayer,

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XXVII.

Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of Truth Thy bondman let me live.

For it is only through Christ that we can obey the call of duty, and recognize our obligations to

SERMON God and to our brethren: we can only shake off the
XXVII. grievous incumbrance of sin by submitting ourselves to the *easy yoke* and *light burthen* of Him who gives rest to the soul, and in "whose service is perfect freedom."

DARJEELING, 1862.

XXVIII. THE FIRST FRUITS OF GOD'S CREATURES.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

JAMES I. 18.

*Of His own will begat He us through the word of truth, that we should
be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

THERE is deep interest for us, brethren, in the stern SERMON
simplicity and lofty purity which distinguish this XXVIII.
Epistle of St James. If St Paul has been called *Epistle of*
the apostle of faith, St John of love, and St Peter (for *St James.*
reasons perhaps a little less cogent) of hope, St James ^{1 Pet. i. 3.}
must be regarded as the special teacher of integrity ^{13. 21. iii.}
and moral rectitude. No doubt there is something ^{15. iv. 7.}
peculiar in the Epistle; something at first sight un- ^{13. v. 10.}
like the other books of the New Testament. There ^{2 Pet. iii.}
is but little direct mention of those truths which ^{4—15. The}
we rightly consider the cardinal and essential doc- ^{character}
trines of Christianity. Such doctrines are rather ^{of St Peter}
implied and referred to than actually brought for- ^{too favours}
ward. The name of our Lord Jesus Christ occurs James i. i.
only twice in all the five chapters. They are oc- ^{ii. 1.}
cupied by moral precepts and exhortations to righte-

SERMON
XXVIII. ousness. Had the whole New Testament contained no other doctrine than we find in St James's Epistle, we should not have learned all that is necessary for the restoration of fallen man to the image of God. But the fact that a letter of so peculiar a character has been preserved among the Christian Scriptures teaches us that we must both study and declare the whole counsel of God, in all its fulness and variety, instead of limiting our attention to one particular portion of it; and it teaches us further, that among the very first and most essential parts of His counsel, on the actual threshold of the Christian temple are inscribed the principles of justice, benevolence, purity, strict morality, and the supremacy of duty in all things, small and great alike. Where these are wanting, neither orthodoxy of doctrine, nor vehemence of Christian profession, nor punctuality in outward devotion, is acceptable with God.

Acts xx.
27. Its author. 2. The author of the Epistle was of course not James the son of Zebedee, who died quite early in the history of the Church, but the James whom St Gal. i. 19. Paul calls *the Lord's brother*, the first president or bishop of the church of Jerusalem, the chosen head and representative of those Christians of Jewish birth who did not quit Palestine, nor abandon in their own practice the customs of their forefathers. Acts xv.
13. Thus we find him taking the leading part in the first council of the Church, which met at Jerusalem to decide how far those customs were to be relaxed or enforced in the case of the Gentiles. So too in

one of the earliest fragments of ecclesiastical history¹, he is represented as retaining this position almost up to the siege of the holy city, a married man (as St Paul tells us) and a faithful witness for Jesus Christ, yet keeping the Nazarite rule, serving the Lord, in the temple, like Anna, *with fastings and prayers night and day*, if haply He would have pity on his ancient people and soften their stony hearts; and actually exercising great influence over even the unbelieving Jews by his strict integrity and stern denunciations of sin, which he uttered almost in the manner and language of an ancient prophet, so that the people regarded him as a saint, and surnamed him "the Just." It is said that at last, when he was publicly testifying to the divine power and future judgement of Jesus Christ, the Scribes and Pharisees rushed upon him, calling out "let us stone James the Just," and murdered him in front of the temple, while he repeated the dying prayers of his Master, and of the first among his fellow-martyrs, *Father, forgive them: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*

SERMON
XXVIII.

1 Cor. ix.
5. Sister in
this pas-
sage means
a Christian
woman.

Luke ii. 37.

Luke xxiii.

34.
Acts vii.

60.

With these characteristics of the writer, the peculiarities of the Epistle coincide. It seems one of the earliest books of the New Testament, addrest to converts who have made but small progress in the knowledge of the Gospel, and who have scarcely yet learned how it develops the spiritual and moral character of the Law. Thus St James rebukes the

¹ Hegesippus, in Euseb. II. 23.

SERMON
XXVIII.
James ii.
19—24.
v. 12.
v. 1—5. iii.
2—10. iv.
16. iii. 16.
i. 27. ii. 1—
4, &c.

spurious faith which trusts merely in a belief *that there is one God*, without thinking exertion in His service a necessary sign of that faith; he writes against the old Jewish casuistry which distinguished between an oath and an affirmation; against the hollow Pharisaical spirit which then pervaded society; the barriers which separated rich from poor; the indifference to morality which could see no sin in evil-speaking, or boasting, or oppression, or envy and strife, or worldliness; against the selfishness too which neglected the widow and the fatherless; and against the meanness which crouched before the powerful in the very house of God. Sometimes he preserves almost exactly the language in which his divine Master had denounced such crimes. It is interesting and instructive to compare the precepts of St James's Epistle with those of St Matthew's Gospel (the Gospel intended, remember, particularly for Jewish converts), and especially of the Sermon on the Mount. The resemblance teaches us that the same sins which were hurrying on the destruction of the Jewish nation, already threatened to corrupt the Christian Church; and therefore that one of the most obvious dangers in the religious life of any one whose heart is touched by a desire for the love of God, is lest he should forget simple moral duties, in his zeal for more definite acts of piety, lest he should profess, like Naaman, his readiness to *do some great thing*, while he thinks it hardly necessary to *wash and be clean* from the ordinary

Cf. Matt.
v. 3, 4, 7,
9, 10—12,
22, 33 ff.
48. vi. 19,
24. vii. 1, 2,
7 ff. 21 ff.

2 Kin. v.
13.

defilements of tongue and thought and temper, which SERMON
XXVIII. he is in danger of contracting at every turn.

3. Coming now more distinctly to the passage Para-
phrase of
the epistle. selected for to-day's epistle, we shall find abundant illustrations of the general character of this book of Holy Scripture. St James addresses his readers in our text as the *first fruits of God's creatures*, as if the number of Christians in the world was still very limited, as if the Gospel had scarcely been preached among the Gentiles, and even the converts belonging to the *twelve tribes which were scattered abroad*, had James i. 1. but recently embraced it. The precepts given are plain, simple, practical, almost elementary warnings against wrath, quarrelling, impatience of instruction. He first reminds them that God is the source of all blessings, temporal and eternal. *Every good* i. 17. *gift, and every perfect gift*, he says, *descends from above, from the Creator of all things, the Father of those glorious lights which we see above us in the sky, Who yet is purer and clearer than they, for with Him there is no change, no alternations of brightness and obscuration, no darkness arising from revolution or eclipse. And the greatest instance of this truth that all things come from Him, is that our life as renewed by Christ is due to Him. Because He willed it, He begat us to a new spi- ver. 18. *ritual life by means of the word which is truth,* (Cf. Joh. i. 13). *the Gospel of His Son, that we might be as it were a first fruit of His creatures, just as under the law the first born of men, of cattle, of fruits, were**

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ver. 19.

offered up to God as a sacrificial gift and pledge that all their kind is really His. Ye know¹ all this, my beloved brethren, and therefore, since the Gospel is of so great efficacy, let every one be eager to hear, slow to speak, desiring instruction rather than

ver. 20.

the power of arguing and retorting, slow to wrath and self-satisfied rejoinder, for the wrath or hastiness of man does not work out and bring into existence that righteousness which God desired to see in us, when he begat us to a new life through the Gos-

ver. 21.

pel. Wherefore putting off all the pollution and rank abundant growth of malice and impatience towards each other, receive in meekness the word of God, which has been sown in your hearts, and which is able to save your souls.

*Examina-
tion of the
text.*

4. And now, brethren, having seen what is the general meaning of to-day's epistle, let us give a little closer attention to the text, which is as it were the central verse, containing the pith and marrow of the passage, and then make a special application of it to our own circumstances. Almost every word of the text is full of instruction, and we will dwell separately on its different parts.

*Cause of
the Chris-
tian's new
life.*

a. *Of His own will* or *because He willed it*, is given as the reason why God bestowed on us a new life. We are to receive this assurance with the

¹ Any one who possesses a modern edition of the Greek Testament, as Alford's or Tischendorf's, will see that *τοτε* and not *ωστε* is the most probable reading. I have therefore translated this reading, but as it makes no difference to the general sense, it was needless to refer to the change in the sermon.

effort to profit by it, and to derive practical good SERMON
XXVIII. from it, not with vain speculations as to the nature of God's decrees, still less with any profane and unworthy thought that He distributes His blessings, like a self-willed human ruler, in an arbitrary and capricious spirit; but with a devout acknowledgement that our baptism, our knowledge of Christianity, our education, our opportunities, any progress or improvement which we have made in holiness, are not the results of our own merit, but of God's goodness, *not of him that willet, nor of him that runneth,* Rom. ix. 16. *but of God that sheweth mercy.* Our feeling should be one of humble gratitude leading to more earnest efforts to deserve God's favour, and to fulfil the responsibilities which He has put upon us. We should contemplate ourselves, and all that we have, and all that we have done, with a loving recognition of the truth of God's word, *not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.* Zech. iv. 6. And thus too we see that although in a famous passage of this Epistle, St James tells us that *we are justified by works,* James ii. 24. because it is only by our works that we can prove our belief in God, yet that he teaches us here, no less clearly than St Paul, that our pardon and justification are not matters of reward, but of God's grace alone.

b. Begat He us. Here again St James, no less Its reality. clearly than St Paul or St John, or than He who Rom. vi. 5 ff. &c. was the common teacher of them all, speaks to us 1 Joh. iii. 14. of that radical change of heart and principle, that Joh. iii.

SERMON
XXVIII. conversion to God, that death unto sin and resurrection to righteousness, which may well be called a new birth. We must pass from death to life, from darkness to light, from the love of ourselves and of this world to the love of God and heaven. And this great change is here declared to be the gift of God, a regeneration of which He is the Author, a new principle implanted in us by Him, which is gradually so to penetrate and sanctify the whole life, that we shall be His children, not only by our creation and adoption, but by resemblance to our Father.

Matt. v.
44, 45.

Its origin. c. We were begotten *by the word of truth*, that is, by the Gospel. We learn from this that it is only through Christianity that we can escape from sin: that our own efforts, our own knowledge, our own philosophy, or again, any human help and human systems, will alike be vain, but that in Christ and Christ alone we shall find the new life and holiness after which we are striving, and to the need and reality of which each man's conscience testifies, unless it is darkened and perverted by obstinacy in evil.

Its object. d. *That we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.* Here St James tells his readers of God's purpose in thus calling them to a new life through the Gospel of His Son, that they might be the first born of the great Christian household, consecrated to God. The first fruits offered under the law were an acknowledgement that *the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof*, a pledge that the

Ps. xxiv. 1.

whole following harvest should be received and enjoyed with due remembrance of the heavenly Giver, and a specimen of the produce which the earth would render in due season. So St James reminds these early converts of their high destiny, that they were the beginning of the great spiritual harvest soon to be gathered in from the whitening fields, the elder brethren who were to be examples and patterns to those who were still to be born into God's family, bound therefore to *adorn the doctrine of God* Cf. Rom. xi. 16 with Num. xv. 18, &c. *their Saviour in all things*, and to avoid every temper and disposition which should hinder them from *working out the righteousness of God*. SERMON XXVIII.

5. And surely, brethren, we cannot fail to see how directly this passage is applicable to ourselves as Christians scattered abroad, like those old converts from the twelve tribes, among an unbelieving population. No doubt we are not of the same nation as they, and therefore not in the strict sense of the term the first fruits of India to Christ. But we are the first fruits of a Church in India, which is to consist, as we hope and believe, of natives of India, just as those Jewish disciples were the first fruits of a Christian Church, which was to consist ultimately not of Jews chiefly, but of Gentiles. And therefore let us remember that since God *has of His own will begotten us by the word of truth*, and placed us in this land *to be a kind of first fruits of His creatures*, He expects us to *shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous* Application of the text to our position in India. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

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1 Tim. iv.
12.

light, and to set an example of Christian faith and practice *in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity*. Let us briefly consider some of our more special obligations to those around us, of whom we are as it were the first fruits. We often complain that falsehood is the national vice of the people of India, and there are no qualities on which an Englishman prides himself with more self-complacency than honesty, uprightness, and truth. Possibly indeed if we were to scrutinize all our commercial transactions and dealings in matters of trade, or to enumerate all the various cases in which deceit, subterfuge, and unfair advantages are by a strange moral obliquity considered excusable, we might doubt whether a large deduction must not be made from our claim to the character of a truth loving people. But still there is no doubt that we have a claim to it, that there are among us classes and persons who shrink from any approach to dishonesty, and that there is no character which an Englishman views with more instinctive abhorrence than the character of a liar. And in any case, whether truthfulness is an English virtue or not, it is no doubt the very first of Christian virtues, for the Gospel itself is *the word of truth*, and *whosoever loveth and maketh a lie* will be driven without pity from the heavenly gates of the new Jerusalem. How important then it is that we should treat all who cross our path in this country with strict justice, and set them an example both in our public and

Rev. xxii.
15.

private dealings of that integrity in which we justly complain that they are miserably wanting. Plainly too there is no more obvious Christian duty than to behave to them with kindness and consideration, claiming as we do to believe in a God whose Name is Love, and to be messengers and pioneers of His Gospel or good news to all men. Think again how constantly we are under the observation of heathen and Mahometan servants. Let us beware of treating them with arrogance, with insolence, with unreasonable anger. Let us take heed that they see the sanctity of the Christian life, and the blessedness of a Christian home. How strange must they think it if they know that their Christian employer never kneels down to commune with his God in private prayer, and never gathers together his family, if he has one, for common worship. There is one more Christian observance which I will notice in connection with this part of the subject. It must be notorious to the natives of this country, that one chief institution and outward symbol of our religion is the observance of the Lord's-day, and they must rightly feel that we are violating a known duty, if we either neglect it ourselves, or employ them in building, or roadmaking, or needless travelling, or similar labours, just as on any other day. Nor is it any defence of this to say that we are not bound to the literal observance of the Mosaic law, and that we are doing no violence to their consciences by making them work on a day to which in their creeds no

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sanctity is attached. All men, the *stranger that was within the gates* of the Jew, the Hindoo who is within ours, were included under the merciful provisions made on this one day for rest from labour. And without entering on the whole question of the obligation of Christians to obey the fourth Commandment, it is at least certain that we are bound to act according to its spirit, and that in the spirit of kindness and compassion to all God's creatures, it granted to them one day's rest from toil. We are not to be less merciful, less thoughtful for others than the Jews were. As we keep the spirit of the sixth Commandment by avoiding an angry impulse, and of the seventh by restraining an impure thought or look; just so we keep the spirit of the fourth, not by diminishing, but by increasing our consideration for our servants and labourers. And therefore by the continuance of work on Sunday, when there is no necessity for it, except our own avarice and the advancement of our own interests, we not only prove to the heathen that we disregard the institutions of our religion, but we selfishly and unjustly deprive them of that weekly rest which God designed for them no less than for ourselves.

*Applica-
tion to our
own souls.*

6. But I must not leave the subject without urging you, in a very few last words, to take a yet more general, and at the same time a more personal view of it. We are not merely to regard ourselves as the first born of God's family in this country, Christians scattered abroad among a heathen popu-

lation. We have duties to our own souls as well as to those around us. If it is a great blessing that God ^{SERMON} *hath begotten us by the word of truth*, think how careful we should be that the new principle of life thus ^{X XVIII.} sown in our hearts should be anxiously watched and nurtured, and so should spring up and bring forth fruit. And here comes in the teaching of the latter part of to-day's epistle. *Let every man be swift to hear*, anxious to improve himself, to learn of Christ's Spirit, and to be conformed to His likeness more and more. Let us *receive with meekness the engrafted word*, so that through its silent operation we may be sanctified in spirit, soul, and body, nourishing it with humble prayer, and earnest struggles against sin, desirous above all things *to grow in* ^{2 Pet. iii.} *grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour* ^{18.} *Jesus Christ, to whom be glory both now and for ever.*

XXIX. THE CHRISTIAN SERVICE OF GOD.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

JAMES I. 27.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

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XXIX.
*Meaning of
the words
religion
and reli-
gious.*

THIS is a text which, as is well known, has caused perplexity to some thoughtful Christians. They have wondered at the declaration that religion consists in any outward service however praiseworthy, in any moral virtue however pure. They have been accustomed to think of benevolence and freedom from worldliness as the signs and fruits of true religion, but they have been taught that the essence of it, the cornerstone and foundation of Christianity, is a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, from which all holiness springs, as fruit from a strong and flourishing tree. And on the other hand the text is a favourite one with those who represent the Redeemer as little more than a moral teacher, and the Christian faith as a code of ethics, only differing from the moral system of Moses by the distinct promise of

a future life, and thus it has been perverted to the support of a most fatal error. But the truth is that both the perplexity and the perversion are alike groundless, resting only on a change which the lapse of time has effected in the meaning of a word. We are accustomed to understand the word *religion* to mean the inward spirit of godliness, and a *religious* man with us is a devout Christian. But in the reign of James I., when our translation of the Bible was made, *religious* and *religion* applied merely to outward worship. At the time of the Reformation, a *religious* person was a member of a monastic order, just as the corresponding word in the French language is used now. So St Paul says of himself, that he *profited in the Jews' religion* (in all their outward Gal. i. 14. formal observances) *above many his equals* or contemporaries, and that *after the straitest sect of their religion he lived a Pharisee*. The word is never used Acts xxvi. 5. in the Bible for inward piety and godliness. So that in reality there is no difficulty in the text, not even the semblance of a contradiction to the teaching found in other parts of the New Testament. True Christianity consists in loving the Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart and soul, and the outward form in which Christianity expresses itself is a willing service freely rendered to all who need our help, and purity from this world's evil. In other forms of faith the outward form and service is a burdensome ceremonial, the inward spirit, or at least that which their lawgivers and the best among their votaries have

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intended to connect with this ceremonial, is a virtuous life. But see how much holier and nobler is the Gospel, how clearly divine in its origin and idea. That which is the very life and highest conception of other systems of belief, is the mere external form of Christianity¹. Its inward spirit and essence is communion with God through Christ, its outward expression and service are benevolence and unspotted integrity. Morality is the body of which faith is the soul. God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ is worshipped, not by the costly devotion of outward splendour, and prolonged formalities, but by *visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world*.

You will remember that in to-day's epistle not only does the word *religion* occur, but its adjective *religious* is found also. Its sense corresponds exactly with that which I have given to *religion*. Those who *seemed to be religious*, or, more exactly, who imagined themselves to be religious, were doubtless punctual in the performance of all rites and ceremonies enjoined by the law, and strict in fulfilling every duty of worship and service which could be seen of men. By going through the whole of to-

¹ This explanation is mainly taken from Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*. He says however that "*θρησκεία* is falsely rendered *religion*: whether by mistake of the translator, or from the intended sense having become obsolete, I cannot decide." The latter reason, as has been shewn in the text, is the cause of the confusion: *religion* was at the time of the Reformation a very accurate version of *θρησκεία*.

day's epistle we shall see more clearly the contrast between this fancied religion and the pure undefiled religion of the text. The whole subject is the substitution of a faithful, moral, self-denying service for a mere heartless and unpractical profession.

2. *Become doers of the word*, says St James, *really obedient to the Gospel in your lives, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror. For he looked at himself, and now has gone his way, and immediately forgot what his appearance in the mirror was. But he who gazed into the perfect law of Christian liberty, the new rule of life revealed in the Gospel, which calls us to a willing and freely offered obedience, and remains there meditating upon it, desiring that his own moral character may be mirrored in it, and not hurrying away like the other, this man, since he is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of work, shall be blest in his doing. And consider in what our Christian work consists. Take first an example to shew what is not the service of God, and then let us see what is. If any man imagines that he is observant of religious service, while he is not bridling his tongue, but is deceiving his heart, this man's service is vain. Religious service, pure and undefiled in the judgement of Him who is our God and Father; is this, to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

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XXIX.

Para-
phrase of
the epistle.

James i.

22.

ver. 23.

ver. 24.

ver. 25.

ver. 26.

ver. 27.

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XXIX.

*Inadequate
conception
of morality
among
early
Christians.*

3. i. We see then what is the general meaning and intention of the passage. No doubt some of these early converts from Judaism to whom the epistle of St James is ¹addressed, found it very hard, trained as they had been in mere outward formalism with no deep sense of personal responsibility, to form an adequate conception of the lofty moral purity involved in that *perfect law of liberty* which they had professed to accept as the guide of their lives. It had not penetrated the will, and become its ruling principle. Possibly there were those who viewed the change from the Jewish to the Christian faith as involving little more than the acknowledgement that the Messiah promised to their nation actually had appeared in the person of Jesus. At all events they had not succeeded in freeing themselves from the bondage of the evil habits in which they had been trained, they had not learned that God as revealed to them in Christ must be worshipped with the service of a blameless life. St James mentions a very obvious fault, that of an unbridled tongue, as an example of the habits which are inconsistent with this service, probably because "many persons who are free from the grosser vices are still afflicted by this malady¹." It is plain that the reference is not to that wilder license of the tongue, by which it serves all the purposes of vice, in tempting and deceiv-

¹ Calvin.

ing, in perjury and injustice. Such crimes deserve harder names than they receive in this place, nor are they likely to be committed by any one who even *seems* or fancies himself *to be religious*. The fault here supposed is a disposition to be talking, with no consideration of what is said, and as those who are addicted to this folly cannot persist for ever in talking of nothing, when common matters are exhausted, "they go on to defamation, scandal, divulging of secrets, their own secrets as well as those of others, anything rather than to be silent¹." Nor is it uncommon for persons influenced (like those to whom St James wrote) by a certain amount of Christian conviction, without duly appreciating the essentially holy character of their creed, to seek to exalt themselves (perhaps almost unconsciously) by detracting from the good fame of others, by questioning their piety, or the soundness of their faith, by criticising their habits in a carping, uncharitable tone, in a word, by shewing themselves indifferent to the reputation and welfare of their brethren. Let me remind you then, my friends, that as a man *not bridling his tongue but deceiving his heart* is declared in this place to have no adequate sense of the true worship and service of God, so in another St James says yet more strongly of an un-governed tongue that it is *a fire, a world of iniquity*, James iii. *it defileth the whole body, setteth on fire the course of*⁶.

SERMON
XXIX.

Careless
talking.

¹ Bishop Butler's Sermon on the Government of the Tongue.

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XXIX.

Matt. xii.
37.

*Requisites
for the true
service of
God.*

Rom. xii.
1.
Joh. iv. 24.

*Benevo-
lence.*

*nature, and is itself set on fire of hell, kindled, that is, by the great enemy for the ruin of our souls. And so too our Lord tells us in language not less solemn and severe, *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

ii. This however is a mere negative view of the subject; in this St James only gives us an instance (one out of many) of a habit by which the religious service of God is violated. In the verse which I read as my text he goes on further to tell us in what that service consists. And he teaches us that its most obvious and indispensable features are two, (a) active benevolence, and (b) unworldliness. It is by the exercise of such Christian virtues as these that, in the language of St Paul, we render to God a *reasonable service*, or, according to our Lord's teaching, *worship Him in sincerity and truth.*

a. We are to *visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.* It is right to dwell for a moment on this word *visit*. Compassion is a feeling implanted by God in human nature; and unless we are utterly hardened by selfishness, the sight of distress must always call it into active exercise. There is therefore no merit in the mere indulgence of this feeling. Indeed many persons find a kind of morbid pleasure and excitement in dwelling on the thought of painful scenes and harrowing events, without ever coming down from the region of sentimental speculation to that of practical usefulness. But the direction to *visit* the afflicted implies activity and exertion. Nor

do we obey it if we are merely ready to give money when we hear a tale of distress. A good-natured person often finds it an easier task to give than to refuse. But to *visit* is to shew a real active sympathy, to stretch out a strong hand to help the falling, to speak tender and encouraging words to the despondent, to advise, cheer, and comfort, to undertake personal and even burdensome service for the sake of our brethren. It is to follow in the footsteps of Him who *though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor*, and who stooped to wash His disciples' feet, *giving them an example, that they should do as He had done to them*. Nor is the precept merely limited to the duty of shewing compassion to those who are below us in the scale of worldly society, and of relieving the wants and sorrows of the poor. All our intercourse with each other should be leavened and sanctified by the principle of sympathy, by the acknowledgement of Christian brotherhood and mutual obligation, by the readiness *to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep*. Thus helping and supporting each other along the rugged path of life, *bearing each other's burdens, and so fulfilling Christ's law*, we shew that we really regard each other as pilgrims and sojourners, travelling from this world to the home of a Father, who loves us all with an impartial love, and in this way there ascends to Him from His Church on earth the holy incense of good works and brotherly affection, as an acceptable offering.

SERMON
XXIX.

2 Cor. viii.

Joh. xiii.

15.

Rom. xii.

15.

Gal. vi. 2.

SERMON
XXIX.
*Unworldli-
ness.*

b. But we are further, as yet another act of worship and religious service, *to keep ourselves unspotted from the world*. Christians then, my brethren, are to be in the world, they are to live as members of ordinary society, not to desert the company and common pursuits of their fellow-men, under the impression that they can thereby bring themselves nearer to God, and escape the temptations which beset their path. They must remain in the world, but yet they must keep themselves pure from its stains, unspotted and undefiled by the enticements which it offers to their evil passions. And here let me ask you to observe how exactly the whole passage which we have been considering may be applied to our own state of society, how accurately it describes our circumstances and temptations, how true therefore it is that amidst all the convulsions and revolutions of nineteen centuries, human life has yet remained essentially unchanged, since we see ourselves and our own dangers mirrored in the precepts addressed to the very earliest of all Christian churches, and we Englishmen have need of exactly the same

JAMES I. 1. advice which was required by the *twelve tribes scattered abroad*. We, like them, are living in a society exposed to the danger of not bridling the tongue, and deceiving itself by the belief that religion is consistent with uncharitable judgements, and harsh, or malicious, or vain and idle words. Our intercourse, like theirs, requires to be hallowed by Christian fellow-feeling, to be purified from hollowness

and conventionality by kindness and mutual help in time of trouble; with us, as with them, all orders and ranks should be bound together by the universal duty of helping the orphan, the widow and the afflicted. And so too our world like theirs is very seductive, very perilous, very apt to destroy by its ambition, and vanity, and selfishness, that purity of heart and life which must ever be the Christian's aim. And as the dangers are the same, so are the remedies and the helps. After this purity and unworldliness, brethren, we must earnestly strive by our own efforts, and by avoiding the evil example and evil influence of the world around us, even as St Paul says to Timothy, *be not partaker of other men's sins*, ^{1 Tim. v.} *keep thyself pure*; but at the same time we must ^{22.} carry on those efforts in entire dependence on Him who alone can keep us from falling, and in remembrance of the prayer in which He interceded for us to His Father, *I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* ^{Joh. xvii. 15.}

4. And the thought of this most gracious and loving prayer reminds us of the explanation of the text with which we started, that the religion here spoken of is the outward service of God only, and must flow from a heart changed and purified by a living faith in Jesus Christ. It is from His Spirit that we must seek the power of rendering this religious service; and doubtless to obtain the aid and teaching of that Spirit is the first duty of our Chris- ^{Inward source of this outward service.}

SERMON
XXIX.

tian calling, and one which the Christian preacher must, above all other duties, press upon his hearers. But still let no one condemn a sermon like the present, treating chiefly of the details of conduct, on the ground that thus to dwell on minor points is not to preach the Gospel. No one can so censure it, unless he is prepared to assert that *James the Lord's brother* did not preach the Gospel either. No doubt such details do not constitute the whole Gospel, nor the most important part of it. But we preach the Gospel faithfully when we tell you that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, and that those who seek that holiness must watch carefully over their words, their feelings, their actions, their daily contact with the world around them. They must remember that it is not enough to call themselves Christians, and attend God's house with punctuality, and bend the knee in prayer, and repeat appointed forms of words, unless they add to these acts of homage the yet higher and more spiritual service of bringing the tongue, the temper, and the life under the government of Christ's Spirit. Even prophets of the old Law could teach that to *obey is better than sacrifice*, that a *broken and contrite heart* is the offering which God *will not despise*, and that the Lord, *who regards not thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil*, requires men to *do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God*. Much more must we Christians serve Him by self-control, and active benevolence and purity, for "the

Heb. xii.
14.

1 Sam. xv.
22.
Ps. li. 17.

Mica vi.
7, 8.

faith which looks down into the perfect law of liberty has light for its garment, its very robe is righteousness¹." And therefore, brethren, as true worshippers of our heavenly Father, let us strive and watch and pray that the *very God of peace may* ^{1 Thess. v. 23.} *sanctify us wholly, and that our whole spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

¹ Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*.

DARJEELING,
1862.

XXX. CHRIST'S ABSENCE AND RETURN.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

1 PET. IV. 7.

The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

SERMON

XXX.

*The thought
of Christ's
absence.*

Joh. xv.
26 ff. xvi.
1 ff.

THE services specially appropriated to this Sunday have the same general reference as those for Ascension Day, with one slight variation in detail. Last Thursday our thoughts were directed to the fact of Christ's Ascension, to-day to the fact of His absence. On Thursday we prayed that as our Lord had ascended, so we in heart and mind might follow Him to heaven, to-day that while He is away from us we may not be left comfortless. In the gospel which has just been read we learn what is the help and comfort granted to us during the time of our Lord's absence from the world which He has redeemed, and in the epistle we are reminded of the frame of heart, the occupations, and the duties, which are suitable for those who in faith and patience are expecting that promise of His return, which was given to His gazing disciples as His bodily presence

was withdrawn from their sight. *This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.* SERMON
XXX.
Acts i. 11.

So spake the angels, as the cloud received His ascending form, and St Peter in the text repeats the warning which he then heard, *the end of all things is at hand*, adding to it the practical inference, *be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer*. No thoughts then can be fitter for us at this season of the Christian year than those connected with Christ's temporary absence and promised return. And in order that by God's help our views may be clear and practical, we will first see what light we can obtain from to-day's epistle, and what are the duties there set before us in connection with the belief that we are now left on earth for a season, *waiting for God's Son from heaven.*

1 Thess. i.
10.

2. With regard to the passage now proposed for our consideration, we shall observe that all its precepts flow naturally from the text. The apostle warns his readers that the end is coming, and then reminds them of the consequences of such a belief, first impressing on them the general duties of sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer, and then some more particular details of conduct. *The end of all things is at hand, therefore, as living in a world soon to pass away, be temperate, sober, and free from all excitement with a view to prayer: in order that when praying you may fix your hearts steadily on the thought of eternity: above all things loving &* Para-
phrase of
the epistle.
1 Pet. iv. 7.

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each other intensely and fervently, because love covers a multitude of sins. We need not suppose when the apostle thus bids us *above all things* to love each other, that he places love above prayer, but rather that all our life as Christians, all true communion with God, presupposes love as its necessary condition, since passion, pride, and selfishness, which are the opposites to love, are the chief hindrances of prayer. "Love disposes to prayer," says Leighton, "for while thy heart is embittered and disaffected to thy brother, it is a mistuned instrument, the strings are not accorded, and so the sound is harsh and offensive. When thou art stirred and in passion against thy brother, what broken, disordered, unfastened stuff are thy requests! therefore the Lord will have this done first, thy heart turned. Go thy way, says He, leave thy gift, and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

(Matt. v.
24.)

(Prov. x.
12. Cf.
James v.
20.)

And this love, the apostle teaches us, shews itself in *hiding a multitude of sins*, an often-quoted proverb, first uttered by the wise king of Israel, which enjoins us, in the spirit of mutual forbearance and forgiveness, to cast a veil over each other's offences, to judge them charitably, and to hide them as it were even from God's sight by the loving prayer that they may be covered with Christ's righteousness and forgiven for His sake. From these foundations of all holiness, prayer to God and love to the brethren, the apostle passes on to speak in detail of the duties resulting from the belief that

the end of all things is at hand. *Let another sign, he says, of your temperance and self-restraint be that you are hospitable one towards another without murmuring, that is with willing openhearted simplicity, and this not only in the interchange of daily charities, but in the application of each individual's higher gifts and graces to the benefit of the whole church. Let each, even as he received any blessing or talent, minister to the need of others, not fancying that such talents are to be devoted to selfish purposes, but exercising them as faithful stewards of the various graces bestowed on you by God. And these rules you must observe both in word and deed: if any man speaks, that is exhorts or reproves others, speaking as one who is delivering God's messages, not his own: if any one ministers to the necessities of others, ministering as out of a store which God has entrusted to his keeping, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus, to whom belongs all the glory and the might for ever and ever. Amen, so let it be, I repeat this and feel it from my very heart of hearts.*

3. You see, brethren, that all the practical exhortations of to-day's epistle, including as they do our plainest duties, are founded upon the truth that *the end of all things is at hand*. Yet, strange to say, there is hardly any declaration in holy Scripture which has given rise to more frequent cavils than this simple assurance. Some persons are fond of asserting that the apostles were mistaken in this

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Objections
to these
warnings.

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belief, that when they wrote the end of all things was not at hand, since the world has lasted for eighteen centuries since their time, and even now shews no symptoms of decaying and waxing old. Others again have ventured to blame them for founding moral precepts on the expectation that this world will pass away. We ought to do right, it is urged, from the simple call of duty, and not from the hope of future reward, which withdraws us from the practical effort to improve the state of things immediately around us, and is after all but a subtle form of selfishness, since it merely transfers the desire of enjoyment from this world to the next, and only delays our pleasures in order that when they come they may be brighter and more lasting. We will therefore now briefly consider these two objections which have been urged against such language as that which we have been considering, and finally we will shew how the latter of them at least is removed by every word of to-day's epistle.

The expectation of the end of the world.

2 Pet. iii.
3: 4.

i. The first objection is a very old one. It was urged by St Peter's own contemporaries, among whom there were found *scoffers* bold enough to say, *Where is the promise of the Lord's coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* But no careful student of Scripture will think it strange that the apostles should be ignorant of the time chosen by the Father for Christ's return to judgement: and again, no thoughtful observer of human events will

consider the warning of the text untrue, unpractical, SERMON XXX. or needless, either in the apostolic or any other age. We heard last Thursday that all information on this subject was expressly refused to the Eleven when our Lord ascended into heaven, and said to them, *It is not for you to know the times and the seasons* Acts i. 7. *which the Father hath put in His own power.* Thus it was distinctly declared to be no part of their general inspiration, or of the Gospel message which they delivered: it was to be an exception to the promise that *the Holy Spirit should guide them into all truth*, Joh. xvi. for it was a truth not necessary but rather hurtful to ^{13.} our spiritual life. Nay, on another occasion our Lord used stronger language still, and declared that even He Himself as the Mediator and Revealer of God to man was not entrusted with this great secret, that in this respect we *see not yet all things put under Him*. Heb. ii. 8. For when some were prying too curiously into God's designs, He said, *Of that day and that hour know-* Mark xiii. *eth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven,* ^{32.} *neither the Son, but the Father only.* Only is from Matt. xxiv. 36. Surely then it should be regarded rather as a confirmation of the truth of the Gospel than an objection to it, that these words have been strictly verified, and that the apostles may have looked forward to a speedier end of all things than was designed in the counsels of Him with whom *one day is as a thousand years,* 2 Pet. iii. *and a thousand years as one day.* We shall re- ^{8.} member too that they carefully guard their converts against falling into any practical error, or drawing

SERMON XXX. any fanatical inference from this expectation. *Be not soon shaken in mind, or troubled,* says St Paul to the Thessalonians, fearful lest his words on the subject should be misinterpreted or misrepresented,

² *Thess.* ii. *neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means.* Thus he and his fellow apostles faithfully fulfilled the intention of God, who designed by veiling the great day in dark clouds which none may penetrate, to teach us at all

^{33.} *Mark* xiii. *times to watch and pray, as knowing not when the time is.* For they warned the men of their own age, and through them the men of every age, that by remembering the uncertainty of the world's duration, they should assign to temporal things their true value, using them as not abusing them, and see, as the passage before us teaches, that the true safety of a Christian consists in a life of prayer and love and active duty, resulting from the belief that he is but a steward, entrusted for a short time with God's manifold gifts, opportunities, and powers.

Preparatory comings of Christ.

And we must remember further, as an explanation of the warning of the text, that Christ is said to come at other times and in other ways besides His final return in bodily form to reign and triumph visibly. Every great revolution in the world's history, every signal judgement and vindication of the truth, is spoken of in the Bible as a coming of the Son of Man. Christ came in this secondary sense when Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles,

and when the dispensation which for fifteen hundred years had comforted God's people was recalled by the decree of Him who gave it. Now when St Peter wrote this Epistle he had abundant reason to foresee the approach of a great catastrophe, a convulsion which should utterly transform the whole face of society. He knew that God was coming down to visit the earth and to bring to an end the state of things then existing, just as He had come down of old to baptize and purify the earth by the waters of the deluge, and to burn up with the fire of His judgement the cities of the plain. He felt the first throes of that fearful earthquake, which soon after overthrew old beliefs and old institutions, and out of which arose a changed and renovated world. From his retreat on the banks of the mighty Euphrates, amidst the crumbling buildings of that ancient city of Babylon, which itself furnished so striking a type of old things passing away, he address to his fellow-Christians in distant lands this warning that the end was at hand, that they must therefore be sober, watchful, often in prayer, that their love must be fervent, their kindness ungrudging, their ministrations of God's gifts ready, liberal, considerate. And are these warnings, brethren, less applicable to us than they were to them? Do we live in times, in a state of society, in a country, where there are no signs of change, no upheaving of human thought, no warnings that the Son of Man is coming, if not for final judgement, at least as He has often come before, to try our work and test our

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1 Pet. v.

13.

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faithfulness? In any case, if we refuse to interpret the apostle's words now of any marked coming of Christ to the world generally, we can at least apply them individually. Each of us, in this land above all lands, must feel how uncertain is his tenure of temporal blessings, how soon the best of them may be snatched away, how needful therefore it is that he should set his affections on things above, and ascend with Christ in heart and mind to heaven, ruling his life by love and duty rather than by selfishness, seeking others' wealth and not his own.

Hope of reward as a motive.

ii. But there are some who object altogether to the hope of heavenly reward as a motive of action. Our plain duty, they say, is to this world, and we only confuse and weaken our efforts to make this world happier and better, by introducing the thought of another. Nay, it is possible to regard the next world in no less selfish and (so to speak) worldly a spirit, than this present world in which we are living now. Like all objections which keep any hold on men's minds, this difficulty rests on a basis of truth. It is quite possible to take a false view of Christian holiness, to disconnect it with this world, with the thought of our daily duties, with the sense of God's presence to the soul, and to value it solely for the sake of its future reward in heaven. The man who is honest because honesty is the best policy is no real lover of integrity and truth. We must love God in Himself: we must cultivate goodness because it is pure and lovely, because our duty and our

inclination alike impel us to do so, because we are wearied of sin and the plague of a polluted heart. All this is quite true, but yet certainly does not prevent us from regarding the heavenly prize as an incentive to action, and from quickening our sluggish energies by the hope of the crown of righteousness. Christ Himself encouraged His disciples by such promises; St Paul was stirred up by them to ever-increasing diligence and greater eagerness in pressing towards the mark. If we are not to lower our conception of goodness by practising it for the sake of future happiness, neither are we required

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to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky,

and to exclude from the heart every feeling except a cold and naked sense of duty. Indeed such a principle would prevent the completion of the Christian character. If we are to be heavenly-minded, we must try to realize the blessedness of heaven. If we are to regard God as our Father, we must regard God's dwelling-place as our home. If we are to love Christ as our ever-present Friend, our affections must follow Him into the unseen region to which He has gone before us. We must believe that though He is absent yet He will return, and receive us unto Himself. If we are to aim at perfection, we must look forward to a state in which the spirits of just men are made perfect. Nor need there be the least danger that by loving heaven we shall be led to neglect

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our duties upon earth. To-day's epistle proves that the natural result of Christian teaching is the exact reverse of this. For what are the obligations which St Peter sets before us as directly following from the belief that the end of all things is at hand? First no doubt sobriety and prayer, abstinence from worldly excitement, and constant communion with God. Were these the only precepts given to us, it might be said that they are such as tend more or less to abstract us from the world. But if we go on to the teaching which follows we shall see that the apostle only raises us above the snares of the world in order that we may more faithfully fulfil its duties. For we are next urged to have *fervent charity among ourselves*, to practise ungrudging hospitality, to use every gift, power, and talent entrusted to us by God for the benefit of our brethren. And, as a matter of fact and history, these consequences of a heavenly mind and sure hope of the future have been abundantly realized. By whose exertions have the worst evils which afflicted mankind been removed, such as gladiators' shows in old times, slavery in our own day? By what teaching have the barbarities of war been mitigated? By whom were hospitals established, and other institutions founded for alleviating misery and enlightening ignorance? Who have always been readiest to tend the sick in times of pestilence, when those whose hopes were limited to this world have fled in their selfishness from the peril of infection? In all such cases true Christians

have ever been foremost, for they have learnt from the Spirit of God that they have nothing which they did not receive, that they must shew compassion to all who need, and that as Christ *laid down His life for them, they also must lay down their lives for the brethren*. Whatever there is in the world of truest happiness, whatever has most purified and ennobled human nature, is due to the influence of that Gospel which teaches us that *the fashion of this world passeth away*, because it also teaches us that Christ has come down to it and redeemed it, and has commanded His followers, as fellow-labourers with Himself, to cleanse it from misery and sin, and because He desires that all who dwell in it now should be made fit to share His Father's glory for ever. Such then, brethren, are the duties by which we must fulfil Christ's will in His absence, and wait for His return. We must regard ourselves as *good stewards of the manifold grace of God*, bound to use the various opportunities which He has given us for the one great object, that He *in all things may be glorified in Jesus Christ*. He is glorified when brethren help brethren by active and persevering kindness, and consecrate their different powers and talents to those good and holy ends which alone are lasting. *The end of all things is at hand*; worldly business must cease to interest, worldly pleasure must cease to gratify; changes will come and hurry us away from all that now absorbs our attention; sickness and death are ever near us; all around is transitory and

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1 Joh. iii.
16.

1 Cor. vii.
31.

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XXX. uncertain; but there is one desire which can never
pall upon us, one principle which will never fail.
That desire, brethren, is the love of heaven, that
Rev. i. 18. principle is faith in Him, *who liveth and was dead,*
and behold, He is alive for evermore.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, CALCUTTA,
1861.

XXXI. MISSIONS.

WHITSUNDAY.

ACTS II. 4.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

WHEN our Lord withdrew His bodily presence from SERMON XXXI.
the earth which He had redeemed, the apostles re- The day of Pentecost.
mained gazing up after Him into heaven, perhaps Acts i. 11.
unable to divest themselves of the belief that He Acts i. 6,
would still, at that very time, *restore the kingdom to* 10.
Israel. But *two men in white apparel* rebuked them
for thus wasting the precious hours in mistaken
longings for a help which, according to Christ's own
promise, was soon to be replaced by a yet richer and
holier source of comfort: they recalled to memory
their Master's parting direction, to *tarry in the city* Luke xxiv.
of Jerusalem, till they should be endued with power 49.
from on high, and so they returned with great joy to
their daily occupations, chose a new witness of the Acts i. 22.
Resurrection to fill the place from which the traitor
had fallen, were *continually in the temple praising* Luke xxiv.
and blessing God, and waiting thankfully and hope- 53.
fully for the promise of the Father. It came at last Luke xxiv. 49.

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Acts ii. 1.

- when they *were all with one accord in one place* on the day of Pentecost, that ancient festival of their nation which marked the ingathering of the year's corn harvest¹, and so was not an unfitting symbol of the great ingathering of all nations into the Church of Christ from fields white already to harvest.
- (Joh. iv. 35.)
(Deut. xvi. 16.)
- On that solemn occasion when every male was required to appear at Jerusalem, it pleased God that those same multitudes who a few weeks before had stood at the Passover round Christ's cross², should witness the inauguration of that faith in a crucified Saviour which was gradually to overspread and over-
2. come the world. A sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind filled the house in which they were sitting, and revealed to their outward ears the mighty influence about to be poured out on their hearts and minds, while their eyes bore witness to the same
 3. fact, when the cloven tongues in appearance as of
 4. fire, descended on their heads. Then they began to speak with divers languages, of which these tongues
 11. were the emblems, as the Spirit gave them utter-
 - 5, 6. ance, and declared the wonderful works of God to the mass of Jews and proselytes whom the sound of the rushing wind³ had attracted to their place .

¹ The notion that it also commemorated the giving of the Law from Sinai, is only a late Jewish opinion, and was unknown in the apostles' time. It has no foundation in Scripture.

² Chrysostom.

³ This seems the true explanation of ver. 6, not "*when this was noised abroad.*" See the margin of the E. V., where for *voice* we should read *sound*.

of assembly. Visitors to the feast from all parts of the civilized world through which the Jews, since the captivity, had been gradually scattered, heard the Gospel proclaimed, each in the language of his own country, by the Galilean peasants and fishers thus miraculously gifted. The promise then was audibly and visibly fulfilled, and the same Divine Comforter, who had brooded as a bird¹ over the waters of creation, and came down like a dove at the Saviour's baptism, was manifested once more to the outward senses as a wind and a fire, and filled the first believers with an irresistible power, the type and foretaste of that gentler and more silent influence with which He still stirs the hearts of every true Christian by holy thoughts and good desires.

And now, brethren, having thus rapidly recalled the circumstances of this miraculous foundation of the Christian Church, let us next enquire what was the meaning and intent of the miracle, and then consider its bearing upon our own duties and religious life.

2. Perhaps I cannot better describe the intention of this gift of tongues than in the words which I have just used, that it was a miraculous foundation of the Christian Church. This is not the most common view of the event, perhaps not the one to which you have been accustomed, but it is undoubt-

SERMON
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9, 10.

*The gift of
tongues.*

¹ This is the true meaning of *moved upon* in Gen. i. 2: "was brooding, as a bird over its nest with outstretched wings." (Williams, *Beginning of the Book of Genesis*, p. 54.)

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**Acts xiv.
11.**

**1 Cor. xii.
10, 30. xiv.
6—23, 27,
28.**

edly the only one which Scripture and the earliest testimony of Church history support. There is no foundation for the opinion that this power of speaking in foreign languages was intended to be the ordinary means of preaching the Gospel. We find no traces either in the New Testament or in early tradition of such a miraculous propagation of it. Paul and Barnabas did not understand the speech of Lycaonia, when the people of Lystra sought to worship them as Mercury and Jupiter. One of the most ancient of Christian historians¹ says that St Mark accompanied St Peter in his missionary journeys as his "interpreter." Within the Roman empire a miraculous power of preaching in foreign tongues would have been very seldom required, for in all the large cities Greek or Latin was universally spoken, in addition to the local language or dialect, and thus in Greek all the Epistles were written, and the greater part of the apostles' speeches and sermons delivered. We learn from the first Epistle to the Corinthians, that many Christians in Corinth had the power of speaking with tongues; yet St Paul merely exhorts them to regulate their gift and keep it within due bounds, instead of urging them, as we should have expected, to go forth from their home, and use it as missionaries beyond the limits of the Roman world. We consider then the supernatural power conferred on the day of Pentecost to have been a typical miracle,

¹ Papias in Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 39. Cf. Irenæus, iii. 1.

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a sign appropriate to the manifestation of a universal church, and of a religion designed to break through the barriers which divide man from man, and nation from nation. The gift was granted to all the believers on the day of Pentecost, and to many others in the earliest age of the church, in order to convey to themselves an overpowering sense of communion with God, and to unbelieving spectators an extraordinary impression of divine influence. More especially on this great day, the last Jewish Pentecost, the first Christian Whitsuntide, God signified by the descent of this new faculty on the disciples that the dispersion of Babel was done away, that variance should give place to unity, the discord of the world to the peace of the church. The framers of our services seem to have intended to teach us this, for in contrast with to-day's epistle they have chosen as to-morrow's first lesson the history of that city and tower in the land of Shinar with which the children of men proposed to defy the majesty of God. *And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language, and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth: and they left off to build their city.* From Babel men were scattered, at Jerusalem they were once more united: the one is the type of disunion and

Gen. xi. 6
—8. (First
lesson for
Monday in
Whitsun-
week:
morning.)

SERMON selfishness and hatred, the other of restoration and
XXXI brotherly love; the one is the godless abode of

Heb. xi. worldly splendour and tyranny, the other is *the city*
10. *which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is*
God. And as on the day when men in the pride of
their own strength began to build the tower of brick
and slime whose top should reach to heaven God
came down and dispersed them, so now on the day
when men were gathered together in faith and love
to await the manifestation of His will, He once more
descended to remove that ancient curse, and united
them again, and taught them to understand one
another and help one another, and invited all those
who had been scattered abroad to return to Him, as
to a reconciled Father, ready to forgive, and to offer

Is. lvii. 19. *peace alike to them that were afar off and to them*
Eph. ii. 17. *that were nigh.* Then began the gradual fulfilment

of those great and precious promises spoken by the
mouth of God's ancient prophets, which are still slowly
approaching their perfect accomplishment. From that
Is. lx. 10. day the sons of strangers have *built up the walls of*
11. *Zion, and its gates have been opened continually, that*
men may bring into it the forces of the Gentiles, and
2. *that their kings may be brought.* For while darkness
was covering the earth, and gross darkness the people,
the Lord came upon that little company of believers,
4. *and His glory was seen upon them. And as they*
lifted up their eyes round about and saw, behold!
the firstfruits of all nations gathered themselves to-
16. *gether, and confest that He was their Saviour and*

their Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob. So they could look forward to a yet brighter though distant day when *violence should no more be heard in their land,* 18. *wasting nor destruction within their borders,* but they *should call the walls of their city Salvation, and its gates Praise.* For those who collected in the house where this new revelation of power had been made, though for a while *amazed and in doubt,* and disposed Acts ii. 12. at first to mock the apostles with the charge that *they were full of new wine,* were *pricked to the heart* 13. when Peter began to preach to them of Jesus and 37. the Resurrection, and to remind them of the old prophecy of Joel that God would one day *pour out of* 17. (Joel ii. 28.) *His Spirit upon all flesh.* They felt that Cretes and Arabians and Persians and Romans and Greeks and Jews might all be united together, in spite of their infinite varieties of language, thought, and character, by the firm bond of a common faith and hope and love, and so three thousand of them were at once baptized, and *continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.* 42.

3. Such then was the effect of that first marvellous display of the power of God's Spirit, when the fusion of divers languages in that chamber at Jerusalem typified the restoration of all mankind to the love of God. As Easter is the birthday of Christ's Gospel, so Whitsuntide is the birthday of Christ's Church. On the one day life and immortality were brought to light, on the other was pro-

Duty of the church in modern times, and in India.

SERMON XXXI. claimed the reconciliation of all nations *unto God in one body by the cross*. And now that His church has lasted for nineteen centuries, what are we, its members and representatives in this age of the world's history, doing for the continuation of the mighty work which was then begun? For in this as in other changes of less moment, God's agency and ours must be combined, we must use the strength which the Holy Spirit bestows. Peter did not content himself with a mere display of his supernatural gift, he at once turned to the astonished spectators, **Eph. ii. 16.** and bade them all *know assuredly that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was Lord and Christ*. And so we in our day, to whom the same Spirit is given, we who are holding for a brief period of time (but a moment in God's estimation) the torch of Christ's truth, which we have received from our fathers and must hand on in undimmed lustre to our sons, we also, according to our various stations and opportunities, must shew forth like him "boldness with fervent zeal constantly to preach the Gospel to all nations¹." It is true that we have no gift of tongues wherewith to arrest attention, no miraculous powers of healing to add conviction to our words, but we have instead of them many wonderful gifts, which we ought to use for the glory of God and the conversion of men. In this country we have the mighty influence of imperial power, to be used for the main-

¹ Proper Preface for Whitsunday.

tenance of order, justice and truth, for the destruction of evil and the furtherance of good. We have refinement and civilization and stores of knowledge; Christian nations stand alone in material prosperity and intellectual progress, and all these advantages, though certainly not the Gospel, may at least be its pioneers and precursors. That they are not the Gospel and can never do its work or be substituted for it is lamentably plain, never plainer perhaps than now, when the temple of peace is inaugurated amidst the din of war, and the chief use which civilized nations are making of their wealth and skill is to try who shall forge the deadliest weapons for mutual destruction¹. Commerce and earthly knowledge and wisdom will never alone bring on the day, when

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Each man finds his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood,
Breaking their mailéd fleets and arméd towers;

but they may undoubtedly be so used as to prepare the way of the Lord. In this land we thankfully believe that they prepare it by uprooting ignorance and error, by bringing different races together, and helping them to know each other, by awakening the minds of those who are crushed by heathenism to the real cause of the greatness of Christian nations, and pointing to the *true Light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world*. But the influence of England upon India must be far more direct than this. Converts must be added to Christ's church,

¹ In 1862 the great Exhibition was opened in London, and civil war was raging in America.

SERMON XXXI. not by the general effect of intellectual and material progress, but by the personal influence and efforts of those who are taught by Christ's Spirit. It is through Christ alone that the nations can be saved from sin, and we who have the knowledge of Christ are bound directly and earnestly to work for their salvation. And those who are not called to the ministry of the Gospel, and therefore not empowered or required actually and literally to preach it, are bound to support and extend Christ's kingdom in four principal ways.

Aid to missions by Christian example.

i. We must promote the great missionary cause by setting a Christian example to those around us, and attracting them to the Gospel by shewing them its fruits. They must see that those who profess to know Christ are made by that knowledge just, and merciful, and true, anxious for the good and happiness of others, no less than for their own. They must understand that the gift of God's Spirit is a reality, that though He no longer endues us with supernatural power, yet He controls the temper, and rules the life, and by delivering us from selfishness and passion, fills us with *love, peace, gentleness, goodness, temperance*, which are the promised proofs of His presence in our hearts.

Gal. v. 22.

By active sympathy.

ii. More directly, we should support missions by active sympathy and interest. It is a strange reflection that very little is generally known even in India, much less in England, of the actual details and progress of missionary work. Yet surely one would think that the endeavour to bring over to the

faith of Christ an ancient nation, or rather a collection of nations, rich in historical recollections, in poetry, philosophy, and science, connected with ourselves by the ties of blood and still more closely by political allegiance, is not an unimportant or uninteresting subject for inquiry and active cooperation. It might be supposed that as there is no duty more urgently impressed upon us in the Bible than that of preaching the Gospel, extending the borders of Christ's kingdom, gathering in the fulness of the Gentiles, we who believe the Bible, and accept it as the chief guide and blessing of our lives, would be eager to make others partakers of its saving knowledge also. And the fact that those who are labouring in this noble work have given up home, friends, country, sometimes brilliant prospects of worldly comfort or wealth, through faith in their Saviour and love to those for whom He died, is one which would naturally call forth our best feelings of sympathy and admiration. Let us then, brethren, act in this point henceforth with greater consistency, and shew a true zeal for Christ, supporting the men who thus literally and faithfully obey His commandment, and who set before the nations of India the one bright example of Christian self-sacrifice.

iii. We must help the work by unselfish and ungrudging contributions of our substance. Without this the profession of interest and sympathy is merely the language of those who say to the poor *Depart hence, be ye warmed and filled*, and yet give

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JAMES II.
16.

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not those things which are needful. Surely the cause is important enough, and the benefits which we have ourselves received from Christ are great enough to require from us some exercise of self-denial in this matter. Most of us would find it a humiliating thought fairly to consider how much we spend on our own pleasure, how much for the highest good of our brethren, and this too while we profess to be disciples of Him, who *though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.*

2 Cor. viii.
9.

By prayer.

iv. Lastly, we should strengthen the hands of missionaries by our prayers. It is to be feared that very few of us make the conversion of the heathen habitually a subject of prayer, or even offer up with real heartiness and due appreciation of their meaning, the familiar words, *Thy kingdom come.* Let us seek for grace to fulfil our duty better in this point also, let us ask God to warm our cold and sluggish hearts to a sense of Christ's love for us, and so let us care for one another, and help one another, and pray for one another more than we have done, especially for those who are engaged in the most directly Christian of all works, and for those who are groping in the gloomiest of all kinds of ignorance, the ignorance of the Gospel.

*Fitness of
the subject
for Whit-
sunday.
2 Cor. vi.
1.*

4. Brethren, no thoughts and lessons and duties can be fitter for this great festival than these which I have just tried to bring before you. By such efforts as these we must *as workers together with God,*

build the walls of Jerusalem. We must continue to rear the goodly structure of which the foundations were laid as on this day. We must strive and pray that those around us, now lost in darkness and error, may be built up as *lively stones* into the *spiritual* ^{1 Pet. ii. 5.} *house* and Church of God. So will this day's work be accomplished, and *the holy city, new Jerusalem,* ^{Rev. xxi.} *will come down from God out of heaven, prepared as* ^{2, 3.} *a bride adorned for her husband.* So will war and discord and ignorance flee away, and a great voice out of heaven will say, *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

DARJEELING,
1862.

XXXII. THE ADORATION OF GOD.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

REV. IV. 8.

They rest not day and night saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

SERMON
XXXII.
*The Book
of Revela-
tion.*

FROM the undeniable difficulties which attend the interpretation of certain passages in the book of Revelation, from the farfetched and fantastic explanations which have been suggested for them, and from the unfortunately rare occasions on which any part of it is read in our Church service, many people have imbibed the notion that it merely consists of a mysterious and almost unintelligible series of predictions, that its study leads man astray from sobriety and common sense, and that it is scarcely intended for the use of ordinary Christians. Such views are much to be condemned. Those who entertain them deprive themselves of the use of a portion of God's word full of warning, comfort, encouragement, and hope. No doubt its meaning can sometimes only be dimly guessed, because it stretches

its comprehensive grasp far beyond the limits of human ken, to the final triumph of God's kingdom upon earth, the judgement and consummation of all things. But that we ought to use it and profit by it is certain, else why is it included in Scripture, and why are special blessings pronounced on *him that readeth, and them that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein?* And in fact it is an entire mistake to suppose that the book is mainly occupied by a doubtful anticipation of history, or by predictions of particular events still unfulfilled. It contains a rich abundance of exhortations to holiness, of great and precious promises, and of earnest warnings. It opens heaven to our gaze, and in descriptions of unequalled sublimity raises our hearts towards a due conception of the majesty of God. It speaks to us of the setting of *the great white throne,* and of the dead, small and great, standing before God, to be judged out of those things which are written in His book, according to their works. It denounces His severest judgements against the false, and the impure, and whatsoever worketh abomination. It reveals to us *the heavenly city, new Jerusalem,* coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and assures us that then God shall wipe all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. It teaches us that God by His providence is guiding

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Rev. i. 3.

xxii. 7.

xx. 11, 12.

xxi. 27.

xxii. 15.

xxi. 2, 4.

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- the course of modern history, the history of our own day, the events amongst which we are living, with no less care and love than He displayed towards His own chosen people, when He was preparing mankind for the coming of Christ. Thus we receive from this book the comforting assurance that good will finally prevail over evil, that though its triumph may be long delayed, and though the servants of God may be tempted in their frequent vexation and disappointment to cry *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge?* yet at last the Lord Omnipotent shall reign, and the *Lamb shall overcome* His enemies. Here then, brethren, quite apart from any doubtful interpretations, is a copious fund of help and blessing, to him *that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*
- vi. 10.
- xvii. 14.
- xxii. 7.

*Connection
of Trinity
Sunday
with the
passage ap-
pointed for
the epistle.*

2. The passage chosen from it for to-day's epistle contains the solemn opening of the great series of visions revealed to the apostle John. It is singularly appropriate to the present festival. For as, during the six months which have passed since Advent Sunday, we have commemorated the separate acts by which *God in Chris! reconciled the world unto Himself*, and have been taught the various practical and religious lessons separately connected with each, so to-day we contemplate, not so much the acts of God, as God Himself, we look upon the work of Redemption as accomplished, we turn our thoughts in grateful adoration to Him who is the
- 2 Cor. v.
19.

source of all our blessings, we call to mind our whole duty to Him, and pray for His grace and support faithfully to perform it. The vision which St John was permitted to see is specially fitted to "lift up our hearts unto the Lord." Let us now therefore examine its details, trying as far as we can with God's help to understand its imagery, to learn the spiritual truths which it contains, and then let us go forth again to our daily work, whatever it be to which we are called, with a livelier faith in our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and a deeper desire to do all things to His glory.

3. St John was a prisoner in Patmos, a barren rock in the Archipelago, some thirty miles in circumference, condemned, as we are told¹, by the emperor Domitian, to labour in the mines *Context and explanation of the passage.* *Rev. i. 9. word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,* that is for being a Christian. He was not deserted in his dreary exile by that Master who had so faithfully loved him when on earth, and on whose breast *Joh. xiii. 23. Rev. i. 10.* at supper he had been privileged to lean. On the Lord's day, the first day of the week, the weekly festival of Christ's Resurrection, he was brought by divine power into a state of spiritual ecstasy or trance, and heard a voice speaking to him as loud as a trumpet. Once more he was permitted to gaze on the face of the Son of Man, no longer in His

¹ *By Domitian rests on the authority of Irenæus, d. A.D. 180; in the mines, on that of Victorinus, bishop of Pettau in Pannonia, d. A.D. 303. For an account of Patmos, see Stanley, Sermons in the East, p. 225.*

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- humiliation as a man of sorrow, but now in glory, as the King and High-priest of the redeemed world. He was bidden to write seven epistles, full of encouragement and also full of warning, to the seven churches of Asia, among which he had laboured and was to labour again, and then, when Christ had
- iv. 1. finished speaking, he looked, and lo, a door open in heaven revealed to him the abode of God, and the same trumpet-like voice which he had originally heard¹ bade him come up through the opened door, and look on the things which were to come to pass.
2. He was again in the Spirit, experiencing a new
3. visitation of the divine power, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, and upon the throne was One sitting, even the Eternal Father, in appearance like to a jasper and a sardine stone, while the throne was surrounded by an arch of light, in shape a rainbow, and in colour an emerald. Jasper is of a white or yellow hue, the sardine stone is probably the red cornelian. When in a later chapter the apostle describes the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven and having the glory of God, he says that her *light was like a jasper stone, clear as crystal*, and both jasper and sardine appear in the foundations of her walls. In several places of the Old Testament a combination of white and red light symbolizes the divine majesty. When the hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel by the river Chebar, a

(xxi. 11,
19, 20.)

¹ This is the meaning of *the first voice*.

great cloud appeared of the colour of amber, in the midst of fire. Daniel beheld the Ancient of days arrayed in a garment white as snow, seated on a throne like the fiery flame. These two colours then seem specially appropriated to visions of God: the pure bright jasper¹ perhaps representing His holiness, the fire His justice, for, as we read elsewhere, *our God is a consuming fire*. If so, we can scarcely doubt that the refreshing green of the emerald arch symbolizes His mercy, of which too we are reminded by its rainbow form. Round the central throne of the Almighty were four and twenty other thrones, on which sat four and twenty elders, representing the Saints of the Old and New Covenant, the twelve Patriarchs and the twelve Apostles, just as in the New Jerusalem the names of the twelve tribes are written on the city gates, and the names of the Apostles on the foundations of the wall. Lightnings and thunders and voices proceeded 5. out of the throne, as they had of old accompanied God's manifestation of Himself on Sinai, and before it were burning seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. There is no doubt that these seven spirits signify the one Holy Spirit. For seven is in Scripture the sacred number always used in reference to transactions between God and man. Seven is the number of animals offered in sacrifice for the expiation of sin, the seventh day is the Sab-

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(Ezek. i. 4.
Cf. viii. 2.)
(Dan. vii.
9.)

(Heb. xii.
29.)
(Gen. ix.
13.)

(Rev. xxi.
12, 14.)

(Ex. xix.
16.)

¹ Probably from *הַיָּאֵר* to be bright (Gesenius).

SERMON bath, the pledge and token of the covenant, the
 XXXII. very word seven is connected in etymology with the
 (Lev. xxiii. 18. Num. xxiii. 1, 29. xxix. 32.) Hebrew word meaning *to swear*¹. The reason prob-
 ably is that seven is compounded of three and
 four, of which the former is the number specially
 appropriated to God, the latter to the world, as is
 shewn by its perpetual recurrence in expressions
 concerning nature, the four winds, the four corners
 of the earth, the four living creatures in this chapter,
 (Matt. xxiv. 31.) and the four beasts in the prophecy of Daniel, re-
 (Rev. vii. 1.) presenting the four great earthly empires². Seven
 (Dan. vii. 3-) therefore, by uniting the two, represents to us God,
 not in His nature and essence, but in His active
 operation on man, and so the seven Spirits typify
 the Holy Spirit, imparter of "sevenfold gifts,"
 through whom God stirs the human heart, and from
 whom, as one of the Persons in the Holy Trinity, the
 apostle had already in this very book sent his saluta-
 tion to his readers, *Grace be unto you and peace*
 (Rev. i. 4, 5-) *from Him which is, and which was, and which is to*
come, and from the Seven Spirits which are before
 6. *His throne, and from Jesus Christ.* Moreover before
 the throne the apostle beholds as it were a sea like
 crystal, smooth and motionless, indicating the ma-
 jestic rest and purity of heaven, and in the midst
 of the throne and round it, so as partly to cover
 7. it with their wings, were four living creatures, full of
 8. eyes before and behind, with faces of a lion, an ox,

¹ שבע (shába) to swear. שבע (sheba) seven.

² Trench, on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia, p. 53.

a man, and an eagle, each with six wings, representing all animated nature, as we infer from the number four already explained, and from their forms, which are those of the highest and noblest of all creatures, man; the chief of wild beasts, the lion; the chief of tame beasts, the ox; and the chief of birds, the eagle. So Ezekiel sees four beings in attendance on God (Ezek. i. 10.) compounded of these same four forms; and thus too the winged seraphims, whom Isaiah beheld in the temple, seem to have been types of all creaturely life, since they hymned God's praise by singing that *the whole earth is full of His glory*. These four (Is. vi. 3.) living creatures as symbolizing creation, and the twenty-four elders as the first-fruits of Redemption, now join in the grateful adoration of God. The living creatures rest not day nor night repeating the glorious hymn, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come*. And the twenty-four elders unite the praises of the Church with those of the animated world, and will do so for ever. *And whensoever the living creatures shall give* 9. (the verb in the original is future) *glory and honour and thanks to Him that sitteth upon the throne, to Him that liveth for ever and ever, the four and* 10. *twenty elders shall fall down before Him that sitteth upon the throne, and shall worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and disclaiming all merit or dignity in themselves, shall cast down their crowns before* 11. *the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, our*

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SERMON XXXII. God¹, to receive the glory and the honour and the power, for Thou didst create the universe, and because Thou didst will it, they had their being² and were created.

Praise and adoration necessary elements of prayer.

4. And now, brethren, is there any thing to be learned from this Scripture, beyond a bare admiration for the gorgeous imagery of a sublime poetical description? I think that from the explanation given of that imagery you have seen that there is much to be learned directly bearing on our religious life; let us then draw from it a general and also a particular lesson. The general one is obvious. Such a passage should strengthen and deepen our conceptions of God's majesty, and help us to feel practically that *there is no creature which is not manifest in His sight, but that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*. And the particular lesson follows from the general. We should learn from it to add more reality, a more fervent depth of devotion, a more earnest contemplation of the divine character and attributes to our own private prayers. I doubt whether those prayers often include a distinct, conscious, heartfelt communion with God. We think much more about ourselves than about Him. We enumerate perhaps

Heb. iv.
13.

¹ These words though not in the received text, are found in the best MSS., and seem specially appropriate to the chorus of the Redeemed.

² *ἦσαν*, not *εἰσὶν*, seems the true reading.

our own more obvious faults, and ask to be forgiven for them. We pray for help against the dangers that beset us, and the temptations to which we yield most easily. Perhaps we carry our thoughts so far beyond ourselves as to pray for our absent friends and kindred, for our Queen and country, for the spread of Christ's truth. But have not these prayers too often rather the character of pious wishes and aspirations than of actual intercourse with a living Person of infinite power, infinite love, and infinite holiness, connected with us by the nearest and most sacred ties, as our Father, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier? It is to be feared that praise and adoration, and meditation on the goodness and greatness of God, form but a small portion of our worship. Doubtless in such matters as these, the deepest secrets of each man's being, we are all differently constituted; the nature of one person is more contemplative, of another more practical, and so even among those who approach God with the same living faith, and the same earnest desire to serve Him, each will offer up his prayers to Him with many variations of form and detail: one will give more time to confession, another to thanksgiving, another to intercession, a fourth to praise. And it must never be forgotten that in this life action is the end of contemplation, that the chief reason why we should fix our thoughts on the nature and attributes of God, is that we may *have grace to serve Him acceptably* Heb. xii. *with reverence and godly fear.* But in spite of these ^{28.}

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SERMON
XXXII.
Joh. ix. 4.

Ps. lxxvii.
3. P. B.
version.

differences of temperament, and the common duty of working heartily and vigorously *before the night cometh, when no man can work*, it is most needful that we should fit our minds for prayer by an awful contemplation of God's majesty, and a grateful remembrance of his mercy. In the very simplest of all prayers, that which is a model for every other, our Lord does not permit us to make known our wants to God till we have called to mind His love as our Father, and His majestic purity as dwelling in Heaven. The Psalmist tells us that the true remedy for sorrow is to carry our thoughts upward from ourselves to Him. *When I am in heaviness*, he says, *I will think upon God*. In this as in other points our Church services faithfully reflect the teaching of Scripture. The grandest of all uninspired hymns, the *Te Deum*, is an expansion of the great choruses which we have heard in to-day's epistle. In it we commemorate the greatness of God as the Lord of earth and angels and glorified saints, and of the holy Church throughout all the world, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Redeemer, our Comforter, our Judge, before we pray Him to help His servants and keep them without sin. The Creeds, as used in public worship, are triumphant confessions of the power and love of God, and of the blessings revealed in His Gospel. So too if we seek to profit by the experience of those who have done great things for Christ, and won the crown of righteousness, we find generally that they were remarkable for forgetting

themselves, and thinking much of God. For instance in the Confessions of Augustine, whom no one can deny to have been a man of energetic action, as well as of thought, a Christian hero as well as a Christian philosopher, we shall find copious meditations on the greatness, the omnipresence, the infinite virtues of God, His triune nature, His work in creation, His love as manifested in Jesus Christ; together with a concluding prayer that as man cannot learn from man, nor angels from angel, nor man from angel, what is the true bliss of rest in God, so we may seek it from Him, and find it in Him, and that in Him it may be opened to us for ever¹. Indeed the whole tendency of the Christian religion is to save us at once from pride and from despair, from an unblest self-sufficiency on the one hand, and on the other from the morbid scruples of an anxious conscience unenlightened by divine comfort, and so leading to remorse and recklessness. This it does by teaching us that sincere humility which recognizes dependence on God as the true law and spirit of our life. Doubtless the sinner can never feel too much penitence for his past transgressions, for passions indulged, opportunities neglected, a life wasted in selfish indolence, (and indeed this penitence will be rendered deeper by the contrast of God's holiness); but still he must remember "that not he but Christ is to redeem him, and the way to be

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¹ Aug. Conf. xiii. 38. Cf. i. 1—4 and x. xii. xiii. *passim*.

SERMON redeemed is to think with will, mind, and affec-
XXXII. tions on Christ and not on himself¹." Therefore, brethren, let the devotional reading of Scripture or of the writings of good men form a part of your daily prayers: do not indeed fail to pray in your own language concerning your own inmost wants and troubles, for no written words can meet all the needs of one who really communes with his own heart, but connect these wants and troubles with the thought of God, with His mercy in creation and redemption, with the life and death of Christ, with the promise of the Holy Spirit. And now let me read to you an example of such prayer and adoration, in spirit and language not unlike those angelic hymns which St John heard in heaven. Let us join together in offering it up to God with our whole hearts, and so conclude:

"O God the Father, of Heaven, who didst marvellously create the world out of nothing, who governest and sustainest heaven and earth with Thy power, who for our sakes didst give Thy Only Begotten Son to be put to death: O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, who didst deign to be born of a virgin, who didst wash us from our sins in Thy precious blood, who rising from the dead didst ascend victor in heaven: O God the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who in the form of a dove didst descend upon Jesus, who didst appear upon the apostles like cloven tongues of fire, who visitest and confirmest

¹ Coleridge.

with Thy grace the hearts of Thy saints; Holy, Supreme, Eternal, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, Father of goodness, Son of love, Spirit of bounty, whose majesty is inscrutable, and power incomparable, and goodness inestimable, whose work is life, whose love is grace, whose contemplation is glory; Thee I adore, Thee I invoke, with the whole affection of my heart, I bless Thee now and ever; Thou who art Lord of both quick and dead, Whose are we, whom this present world yet retaineth in the flesh, Whose are they also, whom the life to come hath already received: O give to Thy Church truth and peace, and to us sinners penitence and pardon¹."

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XXXII.

¹ Abridged from Bishop Andrewes.

DARJEELING, 1862.

XXXIII. GOD IS LOVE.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

I JOHN IV. 8.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

SERMON
XXXIII.
*Sundays
after Trin-
ity.*

THE passages of Scripture, selected as the epistles and gospels for the Sundays after Trinity, are essentially practical in their teaching. Thus the Christian year may be divided into two portions. The first is from Advent to Trinity Sunday, in which the great facts of our religion, the approach of Christ, His birth, and circumcision, His fasting, His passion, death and burial, His resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, are brought before us in succession, and afterwards gathered together as it were in a focus in the great festival of Trinity Sunday, on which we have just contemplated the finished work of God, our redemption completed by the combined love and blessing of Father, Son, and Spirit. The second period is from Trinity to Advent, during which we are led from the revealed

truths and facts of Christianity to their practical consequences, while the Church seems ever pressing home to us the exhortation, *if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them*, and reminding us that if the foundation of Christianity is an adequate knowledge, the only proof of its reality is a consistent life. You have but to glance through the Prayer-book in order to be convinced that this thought was present to its compilers. A striking example and proof of it is furnished by the special services selected for the first of the Sundays thus devoted to instruction in Christian practice. We pray in the collect, "that in keeping of God's commandments we may please Him both in will and deed." And in accordance with the declaration that all the commandments are *comprehended in this one saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, to-day's epistle has been placed at the head of what I may call the practical epistles, and to-day's gospel at the head of the practical gospels. In no other passage from the writings of the apostles is this all-embracing duty of Christian love placed before us so fully and so impressively as in these words of St John, *He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love*. In no other precept or warning which our Lord ever spoke are we so forcibly reminded of the sin and peril involved in a selfish, unloving life, than in that awful parable in which we read of one who was cast into the torments of hell, not for any great and notorious wickedness, not for cruelty, or fraud, or open rebellion

SERMON
XXXIII.Joh. xiii.
17.Rom. xiii.
9.Luke xvi.
19 ff.

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Rom. xiii.
10.

Luke ix.
54.

Para-
phrase of
the epistle.

1 Joh. iv.
7.

against the laws of heaven, but for neglecting a poorer brother, and using for himself alone the good things which God had given him. Since then it is plainly intended that our thoughts should to-day be turned to that *love which is the fulfilling of the law*, let us dwell on the epistle with some care, paraphrasing and explaining it in detail with the earnest prayer that God's Spirit may bring home its teaching to our hearts in all its minutest particulars. It is long, and unless you are willing to bestow upon it your closest attention, you will find it tedious instead of profitable. But if you will give your hearts and minds to it, you will learn from it that brotherly love is the necessary consequence of true communion with God, and as an example of this, that St John himself, who in his vehement and passionate youth had desired to call down fire from heaven on an inhospitable village, was so changed and sanctified by that communion, that in his old age love became the one great theme of all his exhortations.

2. *Beloved*, he says, marking, by this affectionate opening of his address, the solemnity of the words which he was about to utter, *let us love one another, for love has its origin and source in God, and every one that loveth hath been begotten again of God, and received a new spiritual life from Him, and by virtue of that life knoweth and is in communion with God. He that loveth not, hath not even begun to know God, for God is love: love is His very essence, and therefore he that knoweth not love, knoweth not God.*

That God is love has been shewn by His sending His Son to save us. In this was manifested the love of God in regard to us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, the Son who is Himself the source of life to all men, that we might live through Him. And this love was all on God's side, not on ours. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and so loved us that He sent His Son to save us and to die as a propitiation for our sins, that through His blood we might be pardoned and redeemed. Beloved, if it be true that God so loved us as to give His Son for us, we ought also to love one another. This is the only way in which we can return His love, for God hath no one beheld at any time, and therefore the manifestation of love existing in us must be made to our brethren, whom He has appointed to receive our service. If we love one another, then God who is love abideth in us, and love to Him is made perfect within in us. It is thus that we are assured that we are dwelling in Him and He in us, because He has made us partakers of His Spirit, whose first and most essential fruit is love. But this is not the only proof that God loves us: this internal blessing of His Spirit has been accompanied by a great outward manifestation of His love. We apostles have also seen and bear witness to others that the Father hath sent the Son as the Saviour of the world. And thus faith in Him and love to the brethren are the two proofs that we are true Christians. Whoever confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, God

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- abideth in Him and he in God. And we Christians, I John, and you my disciples, have known and believed the love which God feels in regard to us. God, I repeat, is love, and he only who abideth in love, abideth in God, and God abideth in him. And this principle of love, when made perfect within us, confers on us the great blessing of confidence in the day of judgement. And the reason and ground of our confidence in, thinking of that terrible day, is that we who are now in the world are like God, because we abide in love, and therefore, when He comes as our Judge, He will not condemn those who are like Himself. Thus through this confidence we are delivered from fear, for fear exists not in love: perfect love casts fear out of the soul, inasmuch as fear includes in itself the torment of deserved and anticipated punishment, and he who fears has not attained the perfection of love. We love God, through a principle far removed from fear, because He first loved us by sending His Son. But this love can only be proved in one way. If any say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar; for if a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And here is another argument: we cannot love him whose commands we despise, and this is the commandment that God gave us, Let him who loves God love his brother also. This command then we are especially bound to obey.*

(Cf. Joh.
xiii. 34.)

*Meaning
and practi-
cal results
of the text.*

3. So, brethren, we have at last got to the end of this long epistle. It was right first to view it as

a whole, and observe the connection of its different parts, before speaking of them separately. But now we must consider the truth conveyed to us in the text, which from its peculiar character and from its repetition is plainly the central principle on which all the rest is founded, and then we must briefly notice the separate precepts and general teaching of the passage.

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i. It is very important that we should take these striking words, *God is love*, in their literal sense, and not attempt to lower them by any inadequate explanation, as that God is a benevolent Being, full of love to all His creatures. We do not read that God loves, but that He *is love*. Doubtless the words are remarkable, but therefore they claim our deeper attention. And without encouraging us to pry into inscrutable mysteries, they surely raise our thoughts to the very essence of the Godhead, and enable us to discern, in the ages of eternity, before the worlds were made, Love as the bond which joins in One the Three divine Persons, for *the Father loveth the Son*, and the Son has ever shared the Father's glory, and therefore shared His love, and the Spirit of the Father and the Son is the Spirit of love. And let no one venture to say that this is the language of hazy and unpractical speculation. When Christ's apostle here distinctly tells us twice over not that God does love, but that He is Love, it is our duty humbly and reverently to receive this teaching. Nor in truth is the fact thus revealed to us unpractical,

New revelation of God's nature.

Joh. iii.

³⁵
Joh. xvii.

⁵
Gal. v. 22.

SERMON XXXIII. for by our conception of God our whole moral life is coloured. Consider to what the religions of this country have been reduced by regarding God simply as Sovereign Will, and Power, and Infinity. On the contrary, by the revelation of the Gospel that God is in His own inmost nature and being a Father and a Son, that "before all worlds" He was essentially Love, communicating and receiving a real affection, the actual life which we live in this world should be exalted, and all our dearest human relations and family ties sanctified, because we learn that they are faint shadows of eternal realities, which have existed for ever in heaven, before all creation, in the very recess and sanctuary of Deity. Thus this statement that God is Love may perhaps lead us to attach a deeper importance to phrases, whether in Scripture or the Creeds, which we may have past over as mysterious or antiquated, or to which we may practically have assigned no meaning at all. Such expressions as "Only Begotten Son," "begotten before the worlds," "God of God," "being of one substance with the Father," "proceeding from the Father and the Son," will help us to understand that God, if we may venture so to speak, is no solitary personality, but a social Being, that love is as necessary to Him as power, and knowledge, and holiness, that He must be worshipped as loving no less reverently than as creating and preserving, and that the constitution of Divinity is such that God has loved from all eternity. And thus we shall realize more keenly the great

practical proof of His love for us, that He sent His Son to be our Saviour. We shall feel that Christ's Incarnation and Atonement were the direct consequences of the truth that God is Love, and of the love which He must necessarily feel from the very essence of His being. He could not leave the world unredeemed from the misery which man's sin had brought into it, and He provided the costliest of all sacrifices, even the gift of His own dear Son, as a ransom, reconciling therein the perfect holiness and perfect love which are alike essential to His nature.

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ii. Thus then we shall understand how in the passage before us the declaration that God *sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins* follows on the statement that *God is love*, and we shall also see how close and intimate is the connection between faith in Christ and love to one another. For we are called to believe in a loving Saviour, in the loving Son of a loving Father, in a Redemption which is founded upon love, and is designed to animate all who share it with the Spirit of love. To believe in Him, in the deeply real language of the apostle John, is not to know Him by the intellect only, but to fix the heart upon Him, and to live in communion with Him. Now if we are to live in communion with One who is Love, and who loves us so deeply, then love must also become our new nature, our character, our guiding principle, shewing itself in the service of our brethren for whom Christ died, and whom He has appointed to be His representatives on earth, to receive the

*Faith and
love.*

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XXXIII. gratitude which we owe to Him as our Redeemer, and to be benefited by the new principles instilled into our hearts through our communion with Him who is Love. Love then is the foundation of the history of Christianity, the doctrine of Christianity, and the practice of Christianity. Now, my brethren, if this be so, let each of us ask of his own conscience whether he really does love his brethren. The tests and proofs which must decide the question whether he loves or not are not far to seek. They who are apt to quarrel with their brethren, to judge them harshly, to put an unfavourable construction on their motives, to magnify unduly differences of opinion, to postpone justice and mercy and courtesy to selfishness and party spirit, do not love, and therefore, however loud may be their Christian profession, *they are not born of God, nor do they know God*. But they who are willing for Christ's sake to sacrifice their own convenience, time, and substance for the relief of suffering, or the rescue of a brother from ignorance and sin, they who are always ready to believe the best and not the worst of their neighbours, they who are kind, considerate, forgiving, whose tongues are free from calumny, and who seek to drive from their hearts all the suggestions of pride and ill will, these are the true learners in Christ's school, these appreciate the great practical lesson of His Atonement, that *if God so loved us, we ought also so love one another*.

*Fear and
love.*

4. And lastly, brethren, I will ask you to con-

sider how bright a hope, how blessed a reward is here put before any one who endeavours by communion with God, who is Love, to cherish in his own heart the same holy principle. *Perfect love casteth out fear; fear hath torment, but there is no fear in love.* Some of you perhaps may have felt a moment's difficulty in these assurances. You may possibly have thought them inconsistent with that strong commendation of the fear of God which we find often in the Old Testament, and sometimes in the New. *The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever,* says the Psalmist, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews bids us seek for *grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.* But we read elsewhere that *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,* not wisdom itself, observe, but only the beginning of it. A man in his natural unconverted state often feels no fear for God, certainly no love of Him. When he is first roused to a sense of sin and danger, he fears Him, but does not yet love Him, and this is the *beginning of religion or divine wisdom.* As the work of grace advances, he both fears and loves Him, and this, brethren, is a state of mind which, as I trust, many here present to-day have realized. But as the divine principle of love grows up to maturity within him, nurtured by watchfulness and prayer, and active benevolence, and advancing towards perfection under the heavenly blessing of God's Spirit, he is gradually raised to the perfect love, and therefore fearless contemplation of

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Ps. xix. 9.

Heb. xii.
28.

Ps. cxl. 10.

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Almighty God. And thus we shall have *boldness* even *in the* prospect of the *day of judgement*; for as we feel more and more truly that God is Love, and that He is Christ's Father and our Father, we shall be sure, that, since our Saviour died for us, we shall not be forsaken in the great day of His appearing. We shall thus look forward to that day with hope and not with fear; with joy and not with shame. We shall be saved from the torment of uneasy anticipation, and we shall *know*, more and more surely, *in whom we have believed*, for by learning to love as He loved, we shall be gradually changed into His likeness.

2 Tim. i.
12.

ST JAMES'S, CALCUTTA,
1861.

XXXIV. PEACE OF CONSCIENCE.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

1 JOH. III. 19.

*Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts
before Him.*

THE word *heart* is here used to express man's inward judge and monitor, his deepest feeling of right and wrong, *the conscience which bears witness, the thoughts which, in inner strife, accuse or else excuse him.* Now I trust, brethren, that there is no one in this church who has not known the anxieties and felt the stings of an uneasy conscience. For though a Christian is clearly intended to be delivered from such sufferings, yet no one can become a true Christian, or carry on a Christian course, without experience of them. It is one of the consequences of our fallen nature that peace of conscience must result, not from innocence, but from the conquest of sin; and conquest implies struggle, anxiety, temptation, the accusation and condemnation of our conduct by conscience, repentance, and probably many alternations of falling and rising again, of defeat and victory. Some persons who have

SERMON
XXXIV.
Conscience.
Rom. ii. 15.

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Rom. xv.
13.

Ga^l. v. 1.

St John's
style.

by God's mercy been awakened from a life of sin often go through a very painful experience of this kind: it is long before they attain *joy and peace in believing*: God seems altogether alienated from them: the bitter remembrance of the past is ever troubling them: they become anxious, scrupulous, morbid, doubtful whether there is indeed forgiveness for such as they are, so fearful lest they should in any way, even inadvertently, disobey God's law, that instead of *standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free*, they are wholly incapacitated from energy in His service.

2. To-day's epistle contains some important teaching on this subject of conscience, shewing us its proper office and character, and explaining how we should use it to gauge our state as Christians. That at least is the keynote and central subject of the passage, but as usual in St John's writings, other matter is introduced, which though all bearing on the main thought directly before him, yet appears at first sight to be independent of it. It has been said that St Paul is the most logical and intellectual, St James the most practical, and St John the most contemplative among the authors of the New Testament¹. A casual reader might think that he writes in detached aphorisms, rather than connected trains of thought, he seems as it were to repeat himself, placing the same truth before us in different lights, calling attention first to itself, then to its opposite,

¹ Neander, *Pflanzung und Leitung*, Book v. Ch. 4.

and looking at it over and over again from different sides. Hence it is always a matter of difficulty to frame a continuous exposition of any part of his writings. Nevertheless, unless we attempt to do so, we cannot fully understand them, or enter into all their depth and richness of Christian instruction. And therefore if we wish to profit by to-day's epistle, and to gain from it comfort and help in present or future perplexities, we must give our closest attention to the connection between its different parts, and their bearing on the text.

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3. Like his fellow-apostle Paul, St John regards love to the brethren as the crowning point of righteousness, *for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* And this grace of love, he tells us, distinguishes those who serve God from those who serve Him not. Nay, he says further, that we must expect it to be more than a mark of distinction, it is an actual ground of separation and estrangement: those who live in unrighteousness will hate the true people of God, just as Cain was stirred up by envy and malice to the actual murder of Abel, *because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.* And then the apostle proceeds thus. *Marvel not, brethren, if the world hate you. We can afford to disregard alike its favour and its enmity, for we are partakers in a nobler and surer inheritance; we Christians know that we have passed over out of spiritual death into spiritual life, because we love the brethren. The absence of love is the sure proof that a man has not*

Context
and para-
phrase of
the epistle.
Rom. xiii.
8.

1 Joh. iii.
12.

1 Joh. iii.
13.

14.

- SERMON
XXXIV.
15.
(Matt. v.
21 ff. 27 ff.)
- entered upon the Christian life. He that loveth not abideth in spiritual death. Every one that hateth his brother is in thought and feeling a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. And we are not ignorant of the nature of*
16. *true love, we have a divine example of it. In this we have the knowledge and pattern of love, that Christ laid down His life for us, and in imitation of Him, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But what shall we say, if instead of laying down our lives for them, we neglect them altogether?*
17. *Whoso hath the world's good things, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his heart and affections from him, can it be that the love of God abideth*
18. *in him? Dear children, let us not love with word,*
19. *nor yet with tongue, but in deed and in truth. Which thing if we do, we shall know in doing it that we belong to the truth of God, and by this same sign we shall still the questionings of our conscience before Him.*
20. *For if our conscience condemn us, it is because God is greater than our conscience, and knows all things: conscience is the faint echo of His voice, and therefore it is deeply important for our spiritual state that our conscience should be at peace, since in that case God*
21. *is also at peace with us. Beloved, if our conscience condemn us not, we have confidence in approaching*
22. *God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things*
23. *which are pleasing in His sight. And all these commandments are summed up in two, faith in Christ,*

and brotherly love. This is His commandment, that we should believe in the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, according to Christ's command. And he that keepeth God's commandments abideth in God, and God in him. And the proof by which we know that God abideth in us comes from the Spirit which He gave us.

4. I have said that the main subject of this passage is the blessing of a quiet conscience, at peace with God. And surely there is no question more deeply important for us all, none which presses more directly on the heart of a thoughtful person than this, Am I in truth God's child? Has he forgiven me and accepted me? Am I a real Christian, and if so, how can I know it? And the tendency of a person in this anxious state is to look very carefully into his own mind, to examine his motives, his feelings, his religious experiences, to analyze the exact measure of his repentance, his faith, his love to his Saviour, to dwell upon the amount of sensible comfort which he receives in prayer, to scrutinize minutely his inner spiritual condition. Nor is he altogether to be blamed for this. The passage before us seems to shew that he is mistaken, but he is at least deeply earnest and sincere, and contented with no superficial religion. Some persons indeed fatally deceive themselves in this matter, and assume that they are walking in the right and safe path, the narrow way which leads to heaven, merely because they have joined a party, and have adopted certain opinions,

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Grounds of
Christian
peace.

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XXXIV. and are in the habit of using particular language. They think perhaps that separation from the world consists in the comparatively easy task of giving up worldly amusements, not in the life-long labour of driving from their hearts a worldly spirit. Now in order that we may be saved from both these errors, two things seem necessary: first, that our thoughts should be turned from the state of our feelings or professions to the state of our conduct: and secondly, that our hopes should also be fixed on something holier, surer, and firmer than any righteousness which we can attain. The first will save us at once from morbid anxiety and self-delusion, the second from despair. Both these remedies for an uneasy conscience are given in the passage before us, for St John reminds us in it (i) of the practical and moral, (ii) of the outward and objective character of the Gospel.

Brotherly
love.

i. He tells us that they only are *of the truth*, and have past from death unto life, whose conscience bears witness that they are living in obedience to God's commandments, and especially to that all-embracing command of brotherly love. This you will see is the connecting link between the text and the verses which precede it. That absence of the spirit of love which is the true characteristic of the world, was manifested as soon as the Church and the world shewed themselves in direct antagonism in the days of Cain and Abel. Since that time worldliness has assumed various aspects, according to the shifting

circumstances of society, but its root has always been the same, the spirit of selfishness, the want of love. SERMON
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In Noah's days, worldliness shewed itself in the form of violence; in Elijah's, of idolatry; in our Lord's, of Pharisaical hypocrisy and self-righteousness; in our own time, its chief sign is the love of money and earthly comfort. Gen. vi. 13.
vii. 1.
1 Kin. xix.
14.
Matt. xxiii.
13.

But violence, idol worship, spiritual pride, the desire of hoarding or enjoying wealth, all equally prove the absence of love from the soul. Here then are the means of answering the question, *Have we past over from death unto life?* If we truly love the brethren, we have; if we are indifferent about them, careless as to their wants and sufferings, wrapped up in ourselves, our own happiness, and our own aggrandizement, we have not. *Hereby we shall know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.* Nor let any one think that this is an easy criterion of our spiritual condition. Let no one flatter himself that the text is satisfied by any sentimental profession of interest in the sorrows of others, any mechanical almsgiving, any occasional acts of kindness costing us little thought or trouble, any donations to some good cause wrung out of our superfluity by a mere regard to public opinion. St John does not encourage us in any such pleasant delusion. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.* And do we ask the meaning of loving in deed and in truth? This question also is answered for us. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His* ver. 14.
ver. 19.
ver. 18.
ver. 16.

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life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. And we shall not wonder if love is afterwards identified with the entire observance of God's commandments, for he who has attained to this measure of love must have conquered many evil inclinations. Thus we are taught by St Paul that *love suffereth long, and is kind, love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* The love then which proves that we have past from death unto life, includes victories over envy, pride, vanity, insolence, selfishness, a hasty temper, uncharitable thoughts, impatience; in a word, over *every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.*

1 Cor. xiii.
4-7.

2 Cor. x. 5.

*Acceptance
of Christ's
salvation.*

ii. Thus then, brethren, it is the practice of Christianity alone which supplies the test by which our conscience should judge of our spiritual state. But this is not all that we are taught in this passage. We are also reminded of the strong consolation furnished by the outward and objective character of the Christian Revelation. What I mean is this. It is a blessed characteristic of the Gospel, that it carries our thoughts away from ourselves, that it rests our salvation on something external to us, on deeds done for us, and not by us, and reveals to us a Person altogether above us as the Object of our faith, and the source of our spiritual strength and

love. *This is God's commandment, that we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ.* And thus again, instead of leaving us to brood over our shortcomings, and allowing our energies to be paralyzed by remorse and anxiety, God encourages us by the assurance that He loves us, that He desires our salvation, and has sent His own Son to procure it by undergoing the bitter pains of death. Instead of bidding us weep for ever over the sins, which conscience reveals to us, Christ says to us, *Go, and sin no more.* He comes to the guiltiest of us all with the news of pardon, not as the reward, but as the motive and beginning of a religious life. He gives us a basis of hope quite independent of ourselves, by restoring us to the fatherly love of God. Reason tells us that a father must love his children, and will not suffer them to perish. But experience checks this conviction in the case of the Christian, by the thought that we have forfeited our heritage as God's children, for there is wanting in us the necessary signs of sonship, love to our Father, and a belief in His love. But then at last Christ saves us from this sense of desolation by the message that He has redeemed us by His blood, and made us once more the children of God.

5. And now, brethren, not many words are wanting to bring before you these two subjects in their combination, and shew how, taken together, they bring peace to the conscience and confidence towards God. St John teaches us in solemn language the divine authority of conscience and the dignity of

SERMON
XXXIV.
ver. 23.

Joh. viii.
11.

The two
grounds of
peace com-
bined.

SERMON
XXXIV. its functions. It is God's minister, and its voice re-

minds us of the unerring judgement of Him who knoweth all things. We may be sure that if it condemn us, enfeebled as its testimony is by its contact

v.r. 20. with human passion, much more does God condemn us, who tries the very heart and reins. Therefore it is our duty to give it peace. Some indeed quiet their conscience easily enough, by refusing to listen to it, by rousing within themselves a din of excitement and careless laughter, which drowns its voice altogether. But that is not the Christian's way. He

Jer. vi. 14. must not *speaking peace* to himself *when there is no peace*, he can only quiet his conscience by satisfying its demands. He bears in mind the Psalmist's warn-

Ps. xxxvii. ing: *Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing*
38.
(P. B. version.) *that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last.* He remembers how the apostle told Felix that

his was not a religion of indifference or self-satisfaction, but that he *exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.* Daily he tests his progress heavenward, and yet more specially at solemn times, or at the occurrence of grave events in his life. For example, the

one preparation which St Paul enjoins for that Holy Communion to which we have just been invited, is

1 Cor. xi. 28. that we should *examine ourselves, and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* And St John in this passage tells us how we are to examine ourselves: by the rule of God's commandments, by enquiring whether we love our brethren. If we do, he says, our

conscience may be at peace: we are God's children, SERMON XXXIV.
 we are justified and saved, we know that *we are of* vv. 19. 14.
the truth, and have past from death unto life. But
 here will occur another difficulty. This will appear
 the hardest test of all. Our conscience does not
 testify that we love our brethren as we ought. We
 still lament the many occasions on which we yield
 to selfishness or passion, to vanity, to uncharitable
 thoughts, to the lust of heaping up wealth, to the
 desire of personal indulgence. If we examine our
 actions, we have no more security that we have past
 from death unto life than if we scrutinize our feel-
 ings. But then comes in God's blessed revelation,
 with its message of peace to the conscience of every
 penitent sinner. Not thyself but Christ is to redeem
 thee. Thou art redeemed in order to perform good
 works, not because thou hast performed them. Eph. ii. 8
By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of your-
selves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man —10.
should boast. For we are His workmanship, created
in Christ Jesus unto good works. So that the ques-
 tions which those must answer aright who desire peace
 of conscience are practically such as these. Do I
 accept this new creation and believe in it? Am I
 trying to co-operate with God, and fulfilling the pur-
 pose for which He has thus *created me in Christ*
Jesus, by doing all the good works which He has
 prepared for me to walk in? Is my heart fixed on
 the service of Christ, and in spite of weaknesses and
 falls, am I conscious of any progress in the great

SERMON
XXXIV.

work of all, the conquest of selfishness, and the growth of brotherly love? Observe, brethren, that such self-examination as this is perfectly healthful and practical: it does not involve any morbid scrutiny of hopes and fears, motives and desires, which may be affected by natural disposition, nay sometimes even by health and other considerations, independent of our own will, but it turns our thoughts to points which must be clear to us, whether we are spending our time, and our money, and other talents, wholly for our own benefit, or for the benefit of others also, whether we are pure and true, kind and temperate, humble and thoughtful. And again, it is not fatally or necessarily discouraging, for it connects our whole moral life and progress with the recollection that Christ is our Saviour. It convinces us on the one hand that actions are the tests by which God judges of belief and feelings, and therefore stirs us up to watchfulness and activity, but on the other hand it reminds us that Christ requires an honest and sincere devotion to His service, that He knows our weaknesses, and therefore looks only for steady progress, not for perfection. It assures us too that this progress can only be, and certainly will be, the result of earnest prayer. If our conscience testifies that the rule of our life is duty to God, and that we are faithfully trying to *keep His commandments, and to do those things which are pleasing in His sight*, then we know that we have a sure Friend in Heaven, and that *whatsoever we ask we receive of Him*. Therefore

ver. 21.

the self-examination to which St John here calls us SERMON XXXIV. leads directly to prayer, and to such prayer as is sure to be answered: and the answer to that prayer is the bestowal of more grace, a surer growth in holiness, a deeper peace of mind, a nearer approach to that Christian standard of love, which was furnished when *Christ laid down His life for His brethren.* Thus, ver. 16. brethren, the apostle here assures us that we may regard the consoling answers of a purified and enlightened conscience as a divine encouragement to pursue with confidence our Christian struggle, and exhorts us, *forgetting those things which are behind,* Phil. iii. 13, 14 *and reaching forth unto those things which are before, to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

DARJEELING, 1862.

XXXV. HUMILITY.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

1 PET. v. 5.

All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

15.
SERMON XXXV.
The Gospels, and St Peter's first Epistle.

IT is interesting to trace, in this first epistle of St Peter, some incidental allusions to scenes in our Lord's life, in which its author took part, and to words which fell from His gracious lips, while He still taught His disciples upon earth, reminding us that the apostle was one who had *seen with his eyes, and looked upon, and handled the Word of life*. Thus we are especially encouraged to live with our hearts fixed on the future, we are bidden to be always *ready with a reason of the hope that is in us*, to strive for the *incorruptible inheritance reserved for us in heaven*, i. 9. to look forward to *salvation as the end of our faith*, v. 4. and to expect a *crown of glory that fadeth not away*. All this recalls to our recollection the hopeful, confident, impetuous, character of St Peter, sometimes

1 John i. 1.
1 Pet. iii.
1 Pet. i. 4.
Matt. xvi.
16, 22, &c.

praised and encouraged, sometimes restrained and rebuked by our Lord in the Gospels. So too we have references in this Epistle to our Lord's own application of the prophecy that *the stone which the builders disallowed had become the head of the corner*: to His frequent designation of Himself as the good Shepherd, and of His ministers as inferior shepherds feeding the flock under His guidance: to the details of His passion and death, of which the apostle declares himself *a witness*, to His condition and occupation between death and resurrection, to His ascension, to the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, together with other allusions less obvious at first sight, but to be discovered by accurate and thoughtful study. Among these references which do not lie on the surface, but nevertheless seem probable, there are some in to-day's epistle, of which the most remarkable is in the text, although it is concealed by the English version. The word translated *clothed*¹ should be "girt" or "girdled," being derived from the name of a string or band fastening on a garment, and connected with a word signifying the apron or cloth with which a person girt himself before doing any servile work. The first clause of the text, translated quite literally, should be *all of you gird on humility towards one another*, and when we hear it so translated, our thoughts must surely turn to the gracious type and pattern of humility which St Peter witnessed on the night before the cruci-

¹ ἐγκομβώσασθε, κόμβος, ἐγκόμβωμα. The word ὑποτασσόμενοι (*be subject*) is wanting in the best MSS.

SERMON
XXXV.
Matt. xxi.
42.
1 Pet. ii. 7,
25. v. 2, 4.
Of. Joh. x.
1 &c.
Joh. xxi.
15.
1 Pet. ii.
22 ff. iv. 1,
13. v. 1.
iii. 19. iii.
22. i. 12.

SERMON
XXXV.

Joh. xiii.
i ff. See
esp. 6—8.

Joh. xiii.
4, 5.

Joh. xiii.
13—15.

fixion, but failed to comprehend, till our Lord Himself condescended to impress its lessons especially upon him with minute and loving care. You remember how at the last supper, Jesus *knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God*, thought that He could not make a more glorious display of His divine attributes than by an act of the most condescending humility. So *He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself; after that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. And He did not fail to tell us the meaning and intent of the action. Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.* And here St Peter, an eyewitness of this great humiliation, tells us that we, like Christ, must be girded with humility towards each other, with that Christian grace, of which the cloth, which He fastened round His waist for this act of servile ministration, was the appropriate figure. Let us then to-day give our attention to the subject thus solemnly prest upon us, let us endeavour, by following St Peter's words in the epistle, to understand the nature of true humility, and let us then apply our knowledge to examine (i) certain practical errors into which we often fall on

the subject of humility, and (ii) the blessings promised as its consequences. SERMON
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2. *All of you, says the apostle, gird on humility towards one another: because God opposeth Himself to the proud, but giveth grace to the humble and lowly minded. For pride is the offence which specially rises up against God and defies Him, other sins shrink from His presence, but this disregards it, and therefore must necessarily, above all others, be crushed and subdued under Him. Humble yourselves therefore under the strong hand of God, when it is laid on you in the form of affliction or any other depression, receive His appointments in all lowliness, that He may exalt you in the time which seems meet to Him (where again we have an allusion to Christ's own repeated warning, "he that exalteth himself shall be abased, he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"):* Para-
phrase of
the epistle.
1 Pet. v. 5.

casting all your anxiety upon Him, because you know well that He careth for you. Be sober (not intoxicated, or "overcharged," as our Lord says, "with cares of this life"), be watchful (as Christ also warns us, "watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation"): (Luke xiv.
11. xviii.
14.)

your adversary the devil, as a lion roaring from insatiable hunger, prowleth about, seeking whom he may devour, even as we remember his own declaration recorded in one of the earliest books of Scripture, that he was come "from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." But resist him, firm in the faith, being encouraged to withstand Satan's assaults by the knowledge that you (Cf. Luke
xxi. 34.)
(Job i. 7.
ii. 2.)

SERMON
XXXV. *are not fighting alone against him, but that the very same sufferings which you undergo are being accomplished and endured in the case of all your other Christian brethren, who, like you, are in the world.*

10. *But at all events, whether these words are sufficient to console you or not, the God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect you, stablish you firmly, strengthen you, ground you on a*
 11. *sure foundation. To Him be ascribed the power which can alone lead you to victory for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Humility
the founda-
tion of
Christian
faith.*

3. Such then is the importance attached to this Christian grace of humility, both by our Lord's example, and by the teaching of His apostle. But indeed it is so intimately bound up with the whole revelation of the Gospel, that there are few people who deny in theory that it is a necessary part, or we might almost say the necessary foundation, of Christian morality. For the Gospel is based on the fact that *all we like sheep have gone astray*; teaches us that in ourselves *dwelleth no good thing*, warns every man that he must rest all his hopes of holiness and salvation, not on himself but on another, and proclaims, as its very cardinal doctrine, that *Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust*, and that ours are the sins, we the unjust for whom He suffered. Hence the danger is not so much that Christians should deny the necessity of humility, as that they should mistake its character, fail to see its consequences, or perhaps substitute for that divine virtue

Is. l.iii. 6.
Rom. vii.
18.

1 Pet. iii.
18.

some human caricature. Let us briefly notice a few examples of errors on this subject into which we are liable to fall. SERMON XXXV.

i. We have seen that our Christian faith starts from the humbling thought of our own sinfulness. Now *Personal conviction of sinfulness.* it sometimes happens that a man who fully accepts this doctrine does so in such general terms that he quite fails to give it a personal application, or to use it as a means of regarding himself in a lowly spirit. He dwells, often in fervid and rhetorical language, upon the universal corruption of human nature, and upon the fact that *the heart is deceitful above all things* Jer. xvii. *and desperately wicked.* But it is plain that the ⁹ general thought of man's innate propensity to sin no more leads us to humility, than the thought of our limited intellectual faculties, our bodily weakness, our imperfect knowledge. The question is not what each man thinks of human nature, but what he thinks of himself. The apostle does not say, in lowliness of mind let each esteem all men sinners, but *in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better* Phil. ii. 3. *than themselves.* Each should look into his own heart, and see how this terrible fact of universal corruption manifests itself in his own particular case, for thus alone will he attain true humility. Instead of thinking highly of himself because he has, as he supposes, a clear view of this doctrine of original sin, let him rather survey his own life, and compare his actual progress in godliness with his opportunities; let him mourn over time and talents wasted, God's

SERMON
XXXV. mercies undervalued, or returned with ingratitude.

If he sees others around him living in carelessness and sin, let him not compare his actual convictions and conduct with theirs, but rather remember their greater temptations, their fewer advantages, their less favourable circumstances, and instead of thanking

Luke xviii. God that *he is not as other men are*, humbly endeavour to serve them, even though in this service he must stoop as our Lord did, when He washed His disciples' feet.

*Humility
about our
spiritual
gifts and
graces.*

ii. But there are other ways in which persons, not only professing reverence for the Gospel, but really anxious to obey its teaching, sometimes deceive themselves, and find an occasion of falling in that which should have been for their health. Humility, as we have seen, is all important in Christian morality, it is one of its most distinguishing characteristics. It is necessary, in order to change every apparently good action into a really Christian action, and to make it acceptable with God. It is like the cypher at the right hand of a figure, nothing in itself, but yet increasing tenfold the value of that with which it is connected. It is the salt, giving savour to otherwise tasteless food. Yet we sometimes see men actually proud of their right feelings or right actions, and thereby vitiating them altogether. They are vain of their orthodox belief, vain of their knowledge of Scripture, vain of their fluency in expounding it, vain of their charitable deeds, vain of their liberality, their integrity, their readiness to help, or advise, or

rebuke their neighbours. Let us remember, brethren, SERMON
XXXV. that for an action, a speech, or a thought, to deserve admiration the very first requisite is that it should be modest, spontaneous, unassuming; that no man's life is really praiseworthy, unless *in simplicity and* 2 Cor. i. *godly sincerity, he has his conversation in the world.* ^{12.} No advice or remonstrance can be effective, unless it is offered in kindness and without self-seeking. The love of human applause is a canker which will corrupt the most active devotion to outward duty. And the way by which we must escape these snares is to think with mind and will and affection on Christ, and not on ourselves: to remember that *without* Joh. xv. 5. *Christ we can do nothing*, that the source of goodness is from without us and not from within us: to temper any success with the penitent remembrance of our many grievous negligences and omissions, and with the sorrowful thought that a fair outside and specious conduct have concealed a heart tainted with much evil, unseen indeed by man, but known and recorded by God.

iii. Once more, there are persons who though *Humility
the best
source of
content-
ment.* free from these gross and obvious faults of vanity and personal conceit, and from pride in their dealings with men, or in their estimate of their own characters, yet fail to see how humility should pervade their view of God's providential appointments, and produce a childlike resignation to His holy will in all things. This is the aspect of it on which St Peter mainly dwells in to-day's epistle. Having first com-

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XXXV.

Lam. iii.
33.

mended to us the grace of humility in general terms, he follows it out into these special consequences. *Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God: casting all your care upon Him, because He careth for you, and after you have suffered awhile He will stablish, strengthen, settle you.* And Christian humility plainly involves this willing acquiescence in all His dispensations. For if we regard God as His creatures ought to do, contrasting His power with our weakness, and His wisdom with our ignorance, or as His redeemed children ought to do, comparing our sinfulness with His purity, our ingratitude with His infinite love, the penalties which our transgressions merit with the mercies bestowed upon us in Christ, we shall feel conscious that we deserve any sorrows which He may send us, and not only deserve them but need them; for a loving Father *does not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men*, but trains them by a gracious discipline to holiness and life eternal. It is only our pride which murmurs against Him, and refuses to see that He always cares for us, even though His hand be heavy upon us. And thus true humility excludes all discontent, all envy of others who are outwardly happier than we, or have past us in the race of worldly honour, all undue anxiety for the future, all distrust of God. Humility is the feeling with which a child regards its parents; and surely it is the only frame of mind in which we can venture to approach our Father who is in heaven.

4. And now, brethren, having warned you against unworthy and mistaken views of humility, I must in conclusion call your attention to the blessings which are attached to it, and the encouragement thereby given us earnestly to seek it from the source of all holiness. *Humble yourselves*, says the apostle, *that God may exalt you*, not certainly by conferring on you worldly greatness, for that is not His accustomed way of rewarding His people, but by giving you, through His Spirit, abundant help to love and serve Him. *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*: a haughty and arrogant heart cannot comprehend the childlike love and simplicity of the true Christian. Even heathen moralists had a glimmering of the truth that *the Lord hateth a proud look*. *Prov. vi.* "Seest thou not," said one of them, "that God strikes ¹⁷ with His thunder animals of excessive size, and is 'wont to cut off every thing that is in excess'?" But they united this with the unworthy notion that their gods were jealous of human greatness, lest it should rival their own: we know that the Lord of heaven and earth desires His children to be humble, not to depress them, but to exalt them, because true greatness cannot exist without lowliness of mind, and humility is the source and sign of all excellence. For a great and good man must ever have before him so lofty an ideal of excellence that his own efforts to realize it, however much commended by others, must seem to himself only to need God's merciful pardon.

¹ Herod. vii. 10.

SERMON
XXXV. This is true of all aspirations after greatness: it is

true of art and learning, of the efforts of the poet, the statesman, and the hero; but, above all, it is true of the Christian's struggle to be conformed to his Master's pattern. The promise is everywhere the same: God's help and blessing are always for the

Is. lxvi. 2. lowly. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.* The very first of Christ's blessings, the especial promise of the kingdom of heaven, is given

Matt. v. 3. *to the poor in spirit.* Without humility we shall never cease to trust in ourselves, we shall never come to Christ for health and salvation: we shall never follow

Phil. iii. 9. the apostle in renouncing *his own righteousness which is of the law*, and seeking for *that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* If the doctrine of justification by faith is the test of a standing or a falling church, and as might well be added, of a standing or a falling Christian, humility is necessary for us to comprehend, to accept, and to act upon that doctrine. If faith is worthless unless it works by love, still humility is necessary to bring love into active exercise, for self-exaltation, and boasting of one above another, are destructive to all Christian love and fellowship. If the idea of the Christian Church requires each to suffer and rejoice with his brethren, and to perform faithfully the work which God has given him to do, it is still humility which must lead each to accept thankfully and discharge zealously his allotted task with-

out intruding enviously on his brother's office. Thus humility is needed for all missionary work, all other deeds of Christian love, all earnest performance of duty. And, lastly, if the end of Christ's redemption is to unite Christ's redeemed with God, to bring our erring spirits into communion with His Holy Spirit, humility alone will prompt that entire self-surrender, that perfect acceptance of His blessed will, with which we must fall down at our Father's feet, in order that we may be raised and embraced and supported by His *everlasting arms*.

SERMON
XXXV.

Deut.
xxxiii. 27.

DARJEELING, 1862.

XXXVI. THE NEED OF REDEMPTION.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY,

ROM. VIII. 22.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

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XXXVI.

The travail and groaning of the whole creation.

A REFLECTING person who regards Christianity, not as a mere external profession to be especially brought forward on Sundays, and on certain marked occasions in human life, as baptism, marriage, and death, but as the most momentous of all subjects for thought, the most pervading of all principles of conduct, the most enduring of all the interests which surround him, is often perplexed by the contrast between the ideal, and the actual; between what ought to be, and what is; what he might have expected, and what he really sees. A thousand arguments, and above all an inward conviction stronger than any arguments, assure him that there is a Power above him, that he himself and the world in which he lives are the work of God; and he cannot but believe also that

God is good, and just, and merciful. But still, in SERMON XXXVI. spite of these sure convictions, he sees that there is, and long has been, misery everywhere, that as now, so of old, the *whole creation* has been ever *groaning in pain together*, that generation after generation has worked and toiled and suffered, but that a curse seems to have always blighted their labours, that the earth has from the first *brought forth thorns and thistles*, and that man has always *eaten bread in the sweat* Gen. iii. *of his face, till he has returned to the ground out of* ^{18, 19.} *which he was taken.* From every age we hear the same mournful tale of the brokenhearted longing to be healed, the captive to be delivered, the blind eyes Ia. xxxv. to be opened, the deaf ears to be unstopped; of the ^{5.} lxi. i. earth suffering from fraud, and violence, and injustice; and of *creation*¹ *subject to vanity.* Sometimes this reflection stirs men to increased benevolence and more selfdenying activity, but sometimes it leads them to despondency and unbelief: they begin, if not to speak, at least to think of God's fatherly care

¹ Some recent commentators on the Epistle to the Romans follow Augustine in taking *creature*, or *creation* (*κτίσις*) for *mankind* only, especially "the great mass of it, lying still in an unenlightened and degraded state," on the strength of Mark xvi. 15, Col. i. 23. No one disputes that *creation* may be used with a particular reference to the heathen, but De Wette rightly says that if St Paul "had wished to speak of the enslaving and freeing of mankind, he would have referred to sin as the ground of the one, and faith of the other, and to the judgment of unbelievers." For the explanation given in this sermon (after Irenæus, Neander, Alford, Vaughan, &c.) cf. Acts iii. 21, Rev. xxi. 1, and other passages referred to in the course of it.

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XXXVI.

and glorious promises as the visions of some enthusiastic dreamer; or if piety and reverence forbid them to cherish such thoughts, yet practically they are disheartened and confounded, they act as if the present suffering and disorder were parts of the world's essential condition, as if nothing better could either be hoped for, or brought about by the faithful exertions of God's people. Now the perplexities arising from this strange inconsistency between the state of the world and the will of its Creator, whether urged as cavils by unbelievers, or felt as difficulties by believers, whether encouraging the indifference of the careless, or clouding the hope of the thoughtful, will by God's blessing be removed, if we observe that the Gospel never seeks to palliate or overlook them, but always states them in their fullest extent, assures us that they arise from the perversion of God's designs, and claims to possess the means for bringing back disorder into harmony. The apostle Paul in particular not only deeply felt but openly acknowledged them, and regarded their solution as the chief problem of the universe, not to be accomplished in a year or a century or a millennium, but to be gradually worked out by the silent influence of Christianity, and finally accomplished by a direct exertion of the power of God. In the passage of which to-day's epistle forms part, he has been speaking to the Romans of the most terrible instance of this universal confusion, the struggle between the evil which pollutes each man's heart, and the voice of God recalling him through

his conscience to obedience and duty. From this SERMON XXXVI. struggle he tells them that there is no true deliver- Rom. vii. 9—25. ance to be found except in Christ, but that to be in Christ is no light or easy calling, since those only are in Him *who walk not after the flesh, but after the* viii. 1. *Spirit*, and if we are *heirs of God and joint heirs with* viii. 17. *Christ, we must suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.* For this need of suffering is part of the universal law under which not man only, but all the world, animate and inanimate, has fallen. And this leads him to the passage brought before us to-day, on which I must briefly comment, before I apply it to the consolation and encouragement of any who are tempted to think that the traces of a beneficent Creator's handiwork are well nigh blotted out from this world of sin and sorrow.

2. The apostle tells his readers that they must *Para-* not complain of sharing the common lot of suffering, phrase of the Epistle. in which Christ Himself has preceded them, for if their trials have been great, their recompense will be far greater. *For I am convinced that the sufferings* viii. 18. *of the present season, this comparatively short period of sorrow, are not worthy of mention in comparison with the glory which shall be revealed, and come upon us. For the earnest expectation of the creation is* 19. *waiting for the revelation of the sons of God. For all creatures, rational and irrational, nay even the world of nature and material organization of this earth, give signs of want and imperfection, and express, consciously or unconsciously, that they have been brought*

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into a state of suffering and decay, and seem to yearn for the restitution of all things. Here we have the statement of the difficulty and the promise of its removal: St Paul admits the contradiction between the present condition of the world, and the design of an All-wise and All-merciful Creator, but he assures us; as Christ's inspired messenger, that a day is coming when the veil which hides the true character and destiny of God's servants will be withdrawn, and that all creation will share their glory. Then he goes on to speak more precisely both of the disease and the

20. *remedy. For the creation, he continues, was made subject to vanity, that is, to frailty and decay, not of its own choice but by the will of God, who for man's sin inflicted upon it that subjugation to emptiness and corruption, a subjugation however not intended*

21. *to be final, but brightened by a glorious hope; because even the creation itself, the inferior and irrational works of God, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and brought to share the freedom which*

22. *will belong to the future glory of God's children. For we know that the whole even of that inferior creation has been groaning together and travailing together in the effort after deliverance from the beginning up to*

23. *this time. And not only the inferior creation, but we ourselves also who believe in Christ, though we enjoy the presence of His Spirit within us as the first-fruits of our promised bliss, even we ourselves groan in our secret hearts over the misery around us, awaiting a final and complete adoption into God's family, by the*

redemption of our bodies from suffering and all other evil, and their resurrection to that new life in which there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor pain. SERMON
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3. My brethren, these are thoughts which sooner or later must force themselves upon us, unless indeed we are cut off in the midst of carelessness and obstinate indifference. Let us then turn our hearts to them now, for indeed they concern the deepest realities of human life, and let us use them to convince ourselves (i) of the absolute necessity of a Revelation from God to man, and (ii) of our own duty as having received that Revelation. Remedies
for this
misery.

i. Without a Revelation we have nothing to support us under the perplexity arising from the sense and contemplation of misery; and thus we must be driven either to despair, as *having no hope and without God in the world*, or to mere reckless selfishness, like those who said, *let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*. The difficulty has been deeply felt in past times. Two books of the ancient Scripture, Job and Ecclesiastes, are commentaries on the verse *the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now*. In the book of Job we read how God comforted a devout and noble soul, wounded to the quick by this world's sorrows, and crushed for a time by the overwhelming feeling that there was no security for the final triumph of good. From the deepest abyss of suffering he could exclaim, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*, and at last he could say to A Revela-
tion from
God to man.
Eph. ii. 12.
1 Cor. xv.
32.
Job xix.
25.

SERMON XXXVI. God with deep penitence, yet with joyful confidence,
 I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but
 Job xlii. 5. now mine eye seeth Thee. The well-known cry of the
 Eccles. i. Preacher, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*, is here re-
 2. peated by St Paul, *the creature was made subject to
 vanity, not willingly*, but at the same time its bitter-
 ness is removed in the addition, *by reason of Him
 who hath subjected the same in hope*. And as these
 parts of the Old Testament state the difficulty, so in
 another portion of it, the prophecies, we receive the
 promise of its solution. It is now nearly three thou-
 sand years since Isaiah declared, as the messenger of
 Ia. xxxv. God, that *the desert should rejoice and blossom as the
 1, 7, 10. rose, that the parched land should become a pool, and
 the thirsty land springs of water, that the ransomed
 of the Lord should return and obtain joy and glad-
 ness, and that sorrow and sighing should flee away*.
 The Old Testament contains the promise: the New
 Testament teaches that its fulfilment is begun. Within
 a thousand years after this prediction was uttered,
 Christ stood in the Nazarene synagogue to inau-
 gurate the deliverance of creation from vanity, an-
 nouncing that He was come to *preach good tidings to
 the poor, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the
 Lord*. Truly there was need of that acceptable year.
 The difficulties which Job and the Preacher had felt
 were extended and intensified. Men had abandoned
 themselves everywhere with unscrupulous reckless-
 ness to the great struggle of selfish enjoyment, and
 the few brave souls who felt the horror of this dire

Luke iv.
18, 19.

perplexity, and were trusting that a solution might be discovered somewhere at some future time, were left utterly isolated, uninfluential, and unpractical; too often lost in morose gloom or cynical contempt for their fellows. And we may ourselves now witness the same result, whenever men cannot or will not see that Christianity fully recognizes the difficulty, and declares on the authority of God Himself, that Jesus Christ began its removal when He came upon earth, is now carrying it on from heaven, and will complete it in the day of *the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*. Nay, we must often suffer from this perplexity in our own hearts. There are times when the thought of the pollution of sin comes home to the conscience with terrible distinctness. We look anxiously back on our efforts to escape from it, and can only lament our slow progress, and our frequent falls. Or we are suffering perhaps from the inconsiderate unkindness, or the wilful injustice, or the irritating misconceptions of others. We find our best actions depreciated, our honest intentions misunderstood, our errors exaggerated, our conduct harshly judged. We look in vain for comfort, for support, for kindness, even for justice. Or it may be that projects for the good of others, though carefully conceived and executed and committed to God in prayer, are wrecked through human perversity. Or perhaps we are prest down not by the moral, but by the physical evils which surround us, by sickness, by the loss of those whom we love, by disappointment,

SERMON
XXXVI.

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XXXVI.

1 Joh. v.
19.
Ps. li. 5.

by some other of the thousand ills that flesh is heir to. In such cases we feel keenly, sometimes even with a sickening sense of despair, that *the whole world lieth in wickedness*, that *we were shapen in iniquity*, that *creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now*. All God's works, though undeniably retaining clear traces of His handiwork, seem to be as it were perverted and disjointed; evil has penetrated them all, and defiles alike the rational and irrational creation; mind and matter; spirit, soul, and body. Now when we are troubled by such anomalies, and feel that they depress our holiest aspirations, and stifle within us the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God, the only solution which can possibly unravel the confusion around us and within us is the assurance that these things were not always so, and that we have distinct grounds for hoping that they will not continue to be so. This assurance and this hope can rest upon one basis only, a definite Revelation: the certainty that He who made the world has not left it to be tost about as the sport of chance and wickedness, but has plainly told us, by His own accredited messengers, that the groanings of creation will be satisfied, that the travail will result in the happy birth of a better time, that the glorious work of creation was marred by man's sin, and that though for wise reasons evil was suffered to pollute it, yet that a divine remedy is provided, has been already partially applied, and will be perfectly applied hereafter.

ii. But, if we feel and acknowledge both the need and reality of a Revelation, let us remember that we must practically use our convictions to gain strength in resisting the evil which exists both within us and around us. In the midst of doubt and darkness, we must rouse ourselves to fresh efforts by the thought that God has given us in Jesus Christ a sure Light to guide us to Himself. And if we know this, we must gaze steadily on the brightness of His light; we must seek from Him deliverance from our sins, and consolation in our sorrows. Nor must we forget that we are called upon to be His soldiers in the warfare which will end by the rescue of all creation from the bondage of corruption. When we grieve over the evil that defiles ourselves, we should remember that every earnest effort after holiness, and every faithful prayer offered through Christ to our Father, are proofs that we have *the first fruits of the Spirit*, and afford an earnest that our hearts are increasing in purity and holiness through His blessed presence among Christ's chosen people. When we smart under the wrongful dealings of men, we must strengthen ourselves by hoping for *the manifestation of the sons of God*. A manifestation implies that something is now concealed which will hereafter be unveiled. The work of God's children may now be misunderstood, their character depreciated, their objects ridiculed or misrepresented, but in the day when Jesus Christ is revealed, then will also be brought to light many a secret struggle against sin, many a pure and holy

SERMON
XXXVI.

*The earnest
performance of
Christian
duty.*

SERMON
XXXVI.
Col. iii. 4.

2 Pet. iii.
13.

Heb. ii. 10.

Rev. iii.
21.

action unknown to men, many a life of selfsacrifice overlooked or wronged. *When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.* And when we grieve over physical pain and weakness, and over the misery which disturbs the whole creation, we must cheer ourselves by the thought that when our adoption into God's family, already promised and begun, is actually completed, our bodies will be redeemed from all suffering, and we shall be the inhabitants of a *new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*, prepared for the manifestation of God's sons. So then, brethren, let this sense of imperfection, sin, and sorrow, this subjection of all creation to the vanity of vanities, impress upon us more deeply the exceeding preciousness of that redemption by which God is now delivering it, and let the sure hope of that deliverance nerve us to struggle manfully and faithfully against evil, under the banner of Jesus Christ, who as *the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings*, and whose followers must fight with the same weapons by which *He also overcame, and sat down upon His Father's throne.*

XXXVII. THE PRAYERS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

1 PET. III. 12.

The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers.

IT can hardly be said that prayer is the direct subject of to-day's epistle, which rather sets before us the blessings attending a peaceful temper and submission to injuries. But prayer is put prominently forward in the closest connection with that happy disposition. And the whole passage incidentally shews what is meant by a life of prayer, turning our thoughts not so much to the expression of certain desires at definite times, to which we commonly limit our conception of prayer, as to habitual thoughtfulness, constant piety, and a pervading sense of communion with God. Such a view of prayer is so needful for us, that in considering the epistle, I will try to direct your attention rather to this particular part of it, than to the virtues of meekness and resignation,

SERMON
XXXVII.
*Difficulties
urged a-
gainst the
efficacy of
prayer.*

SERMON
XXXVII. which seem to have been more directly in the apostle's mind when he wrote it. There is hardly any truth revealed for our comfort and instruction, which has not been made a mark for doubt and cavil, thought by some persons too good to be true, or denied by others because it cannot be clearly comprehended by the human intellect, or actually hated by those whose vices it forbids, and whose selfishness it alarms. Thus the blessed privilege of approaching God in prayer has been said to be a vain attempt to set up human ignorance against divine wisdom, founded on the presumptuous fancy that we know better than He does what is for our good. It has been asked, how can an All-wise and Almighty Being change the laws by which He guides the universe, in accordance with the wishes of weak and erring men? To all this class of arguments two short answers have been given by two eminent men of our own time, which seem to me abundantly satisfactory for practical and spiritual purposes, while a complete intellectual grasp of any subject where divine and human things are in close contact is, from the nature of the case, impossible. Both these answers are illustrated by the view of prayer given in the passage before us. The first answer is this. When we say that God cannot change His purposes in conformity with our prayers, we are arguing as if the Infinite One were embarrassed by the difficulties which fetter men's finite nature. "Human reason can never draw aught but a human portrait of God. If the God who listens to

prayer is the likeness of human mutability, what is the God who refuses to listen but the likeness of human obstinacy¹?" Just so St Peter, by teaching us in this passage that the essence of prayer consists in a devout and humble communion with God, helps us to remember that He is not only the All-powerful Sovereign of the Universe, *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, but also the kind and gentle Father, whose very nature is love, and who *loved us before the foundation of the world*. And the second answer to these difficulties is that if God can not change or modify His purposes according to our words, neither can He regulate them according to our deeds, and therefore to deny that He can hear prayer is to deny that He is a moral Governor, and the Judge of all men². The force of this answer too will be brought home to us by to-day's epistle, for if we are taught in it that prayer is a habit, a life, a disposition, we shall see that the God who watches all human actions, and will at last *judge the dead out of those things which are written in the books*, according to their works, is acting in perfect consistency with this just and holy purpose, when He accepts the prayers, and listens to the wants, and helps and rewards the efforts, of those who diligently seek Him. So perhaps we shall be led to see that the difficulties which beset this subject, though never urged more pertinaciously than in our own age, are

¹ Mansel's Bampton Lectures.

² Archbishop Whately.

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XXXVII. yet only the old objections which have always seduced men from the simplicity of practical holiness to vain speculations

Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fixed fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute,

in which our imperfect faculties must, from the nature of the case, become more and more hopelessly entangled,

And find no end, in wandering mazes lost.

We will therefore examine to-day's epistle, especially from this point of view, and seek, by God's blessing, to obtain from it encouragement to begin, or if we happily have begun, fresh earnestness and devotion to continue a life of prayer.

Para-
phrase of
the epistle.
1 Pet. iii.
8. 2. *Be ye all, says the apostle, of one mind, sympathizing, brotherly, tender, humble¹, not giving back evil for evil, or reproach for reproach, but, on*

9. *the contrary, blessing him that wrongs you, because unto this ye were called by God, that ye might inherit a blessing from Him.* And then he enforces his exhortations by a quotation from the thirty-fourth

10. Psalm. *For he who desires to lead a happy life, and*
(Ps. xxxiv.
2 ff.) *to see good days, let him stop his tongue from evil,*

11. *and his lips, so that they speak not guile: moreover let him in his conduct turn away from evil, and do good, let him seek peace, and if he cannot find it at once, pursue it diligently as a most precious posses-*

12. *sion. For the eyes of the Lord rest upon righteous*

¹ *ταπεινότητες* is the most probable reading.

men with favour, and His ears are inclined to their prayer, but the face of the Lord rests upon evil doers with anger¹. Here the quotation ends, and the apostle proceeds in his own language. *And who is he that shall harm you, if it be that which is good of which ye become zealous²? Nay, if ye even chance to suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye. But be not affected by the terror with which your enemies seek to frighten you, neither be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.* We read Christ, not God, in the original text of St Peter, but the passage itself is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah: *Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread, and He shall be for a sanctuary.* We see then that the apostle, in quoting the Old Testament, substitutes without scruple the Name of Christ for the Name of God, knowing that practically the two are convertible for the Christian, since we cannot know God except as revealed to us in Christ, and *he who hath seen Him, (or received Him into his heart,) hath seen (or received) the Father.*

3. And now, brethren, let us consider the light which this passage throws on the subject of prayer, and the general character of those to whose prayers the Lord's ears are open. And first I can imagine that you may feel a difficulty in hearing them described as the *righteous*. You may remember our

¹ We have *ἐπὶ* in both clauses: *ἐπὶ δικαίους...ἐπὶ ποιούντας κακὰ.*

² *ζηλωταὶ* rests on better authority than *μμηταὶ*.

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XXXVII.

Matt. ix.
13.

Lord's own words that *He came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*. It is certain that righteousness cannot be attained without prayer, and yet this passage seems to say that no one can pray acceptably till he is righteous. But by righteousness here is not meant perfect freedom from sin. The righteous spoken of in this passage are "the students of obedience and holiness, they that desire to walk in the sight of God, and with God, as Enoch did, that are glad when they can in any way serve Him, and grieved when they offend Him, that feel and bewail their unrighteousness, and are earnestly advancing forward, have a sincere and unfeigned love to all the commandments of God, and diligently endeavour to observe them¹." Just so we read in the Parable of the Sower that the seed which is to

Luke viii.
15.

spring up and bring forth fruit must fall *into an honest and good heart*. The heart cannot be really good till the seed of God's word is implanted in it, and watered by the dew of God's Spirit. But the soil must be suitable to the seed, fitted to nourish it and develop its growth: the heart must be sincere and earnest in its purpose, the man to whom the Gospel is preached must be able to appreciate his own spiritual sickness, and the infinite blessedness of the proffered remedy. So again we read with marked frequency in St John's Gospel that there are certain preliminaries necessary for the growth of the

Joh. v. 44. religious life in the soul. *How can ye believe, which*

¹ Leighton.

receive honour one of another? says our Lord to the Pharisees, how can you receive the good news of God's merciful forgiveness, if you do not value His love and favour, but only care for human approbation? So again He says that *no one can come to Him unless he first hears and learns of the Father*, unless he has a disposition receptive of the truth, and that those only who desire to do His will, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. And thus sincerity and earnestness of purpose are before all things necessary in order that God may hear our prayers, His ears are open only to those to whom religion is a reality. Their spiritual knowledge may be small, their progress slow, their falls only too frequent, but thus much is essential, that they should have set their faces heavenward, and that they should wish to walk according to the pattern of Jesus Christ.

ii. Moreover we shall find that this righteousness, of which the psalmist and the apostle speak, is essentially connected with other spiritual graces which are also necessary to give value to our prayers. The first of these is a peaceable disposition. *Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one towards another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.* St Peter has dwelt on the same subject also in connection with prayer in an earlier verse of the chapter. Look back at the seventh. Taking as his example the closest and holiest of human relations, he exhorts husbands and wives to live together in harmony as *being heirs together of the grace of life, that their*

SERMON
XXXVII.

45.

Joh. vii.

17.

a love of
peace;

1 Pet. iii.

7.

SERMON XXXVII. *prayers be not hindered.* So too in another place, having bidden his converts *to be sober and watch unto prayer*, he adds, *and above all things have fervent charity among yourselves.* In the same way St John tells us that *God is love*, and therefore that *he that loveth not knoweth not God.* For prayer is communion with God; and he who encourages unkind, unforgiving, unloving thoughts, cannot be received into God's presence. Christ's last prayer for His disciples was that *they all might be one in Him and in His Father*: and therefore if they approach Him with hearts alienated from each other, their prayers also must be jarring and inharmonious in His ears. The close connection between loving spirits and acceptable prayers is shewn by the special blessing given to united prayer, by the promise that *where two or three are gathered together in Christ's Name, there is He in the midst of them.* Our meeting in this place to-day is at least an outward protest against the jealousies, and envyings, and rivalries, and misunderstandings, which too often separate from each other members of the same earthly community, and I trust also that it increases our readiness to forbear with one another, to help one another, to love one another, since otherwise the prayers which we have been offering are but idle words, vainly addrest to One who turns aside from their discord in displeasure.

and resignation to our Father's will.

iii. Once more, resignation to our Father's will is a necessary sign and condition of a life of prayer.

We must trust Him and submit to Him in all things. *Who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?* At first sight it might appear that many would harm us, sometimes even with more bitter animosity, in proportion as our zeal for goodness is quickened. But the harm which they can do to us is only apparent, only temporary. Prayer is the refuge, God is the sanctuary, in which we may seek refuge from the storms of tribulation. *Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.* We cannot make Him our sanctuary unless we accept the assurance which He Himself gave to His apostle, *My grace is sufficient for thee,* ^{2 Cor. xii.} unless we recognize His hand in all our troubles, ^{9.} and believe that He chastens those whom He loves. We must come to Him in every difficulty, when the anxieties of life are heavy upon us, when our good designs are opposed or frustrated, when we are grieved and wearied with the burden of our sins. *Rest in the Lord,* says the Psalmist, *and wait patiently for Him...cast thy burden upon the Lord, and* ^{Ps. xxxvii.} ^{17.} ^{12.} *He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved, for His ears are open unto their prayers.*

4. If then we feel that this is the meaning of *A life of* a life of prayer, if it implies earnest sincerity, ^a ^{prayer.} spirit of peace and love, and a childlike submission to the will of God, our aspirations after such a life will be deepened and sanctified, and all intellectual difficulties removed. We shall understand more

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XXXVII.
1 Thess. v.
17.

fully the force of St Paul's injunction, *Pray without ceasing*. We shall no longer think that prayer merely means the utterance of certain words, or the direction of our thoughts to God at particular times. Doubtless it includes definite words and definite thoughts. But as on an occasion when it was disputed whether true Christianity consisted in a state of mind or a course of conduct, one who had realized its power answered that it was "a state of mind necessarily leading to a course of conduct," so the prayer of the righteous is a disposition of the heart and life which necessarily expresses itself by making

Phil. iv. 6. *known its requests to God*. When we learn to regard prayer as the apostles regarded it, we shall not be less frequent or earnest in supplication, thanksgiving, intercession, praise, and confession of sin, than we have been while taking a more limited and mechanical view of it. On the contrary, we shall be more frequent and regular in thus definitely approaching God. But we shall consider prayer to be more completely the pervading and controlling principle of all our conduct, we shall find that "as through God's natural laws, our hearts beat, and our blood flows without our thought for them, so our spiritual life will hold on its course, through His help, at those times when our minds cannot consciously turn to Him, to commit each particular thought to His service¹." And as to intellectual difficulties about God's almighty power and unchangeable laws, they will not long

¹ Arnold.

trouble him who has felt the power and blessing of a life of prayer. Rather he will be quite sure that if there is a *reward for the righteous*, and a *God that judgeth the earth*, if we have a Father in heaven, and are not tost about as the sport of chance, or the victims of an iron destiny, if we have any better hope than the beasts that perish, any reason for choosing good and abhorring evil, above all, if Jesus Christ has died for us and risen again, such a life as this must be blest, and one who is trying so to live will not vainly seek to *sanctify the Lord God in his heart*. Therefore, brethren, ye who desire to live this life of prayer, remember to set before yourselves three objects. First, seek for a *holy heart*: admit no parley with sin, make holiness your constant study, the great object of all your desires. Next, seek for a *loving heart*: remembering that Christ's birth was proclaimed by the chorus of peace and good will, that the end of all His teaching was that *in Him we might have peace*, that His last prayer was offered in behalf of His enemies, that love is the necessary condition of communion with God, for *he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him*. Lastly, seek for a *humble heart*, for God *resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*. "He bows His ear, if thou lift not up thy neck, but from the proud beggar He turns away with disdain, and the humblest suiters always speed best with Him¹." He listens to the righteous, not to such as

¹ Leighton.

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Ps. lviii.

¹¹.

Joh. xvi.

³³.

1 Joh. iv.

¹⁶.

Prov. iii.

³⁴.

James iv.

⁶.

1 Pet. v. 5.

SERMON
XXXVII. are so in their own eyes, but to those who are righteous by His gracious pardon and acceptance, and for Christ's sake He hears their prayers, and gives them the *spirit of adoption, whereby they* are encouraged with fresh confidence to cry *Abba Father*, and He Himself vouchsafes *to be their sanctuary*.

Rom. viii.
15.

DARJEELING, 1862.

XXXVIII. THE BAPTISMAL CALLING.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ROM. VI. 3, 4.

Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

WE have in these verses a strong testimony to the importance of baptism, both as to the change made by it in our condition, and the effects intended to be produced by it on our conduct. Nor does this passage stand alone. The language in which St Paul here addresses the Romans is repeated with no variation of sense to every body of persons who had been baptized into the Name of Christ. All are reminded that in baptism they were made the children of God, and urged to regard this as a deep responsibility, and as a constraining motive for turning away from sin, and for increasing day by day in spiritual life and godliness.

Yet I doubt whether we are in the habit of thus looking back upon our baptism. We are rather

SERMON
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*Import-
ance of
baptism.*

SERMON
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apt to undervalue and neglect it, or perhaps never to think of it at all. A preacher who dwells much on baptismal privileges and baptismal obligations is often unpopular. Several reasons may account for this. Unhappily such views have been (most unjustly) identified with a party, although in truth they are only the views on which our prayer-book and catechism are manifestly founded. But it cannot be denied that many persons who dwell on the importance of baptism are apt to support it by extracts from our Liturgy, rather than by the testimony of the Bible, thereby forgetting the precept given by the Church itself to its ministers, that they should "instruct the people out of the Scriptures," and look to Scripture only for the defence and maintenance of their doctrine¹. Sometimes again it is thought that if we trace our Christian obligation to baptism, we are apt to forget or obscure the necessity of conversion, and that there is some kind of opposition between the two doctrines, whereas the fact that every professing Christian has been baptized furnishes the strongest possible reason why he should consciously turn to Jesus Christ. Again, it is regarded as a carnal and Jewish error to attribute spiritual efficacy to an outward ordinance; and doubtless if we think that baptism alone avails to change the character, we effectually lower Christianity to the level of a service which *stood only in meats and*

Heb. ix.
10.

¹ Ordination of Priests. Article vi.

drinks and divers washings, or even of vain efforts to purge away sinful propensities by lustrations in the holy Ganges. When St Peter says baptism *doth even now save us*, he adds, *not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God*, shewing that in order that baptism may be a saving ordinance, the faith and conscience of the baptized person must respond to God's mercy. But it is no degradation of a spiritual religion to believe that as all mankind were lost by the inheritance of an evil nature, so when Christ lived and died for their redemption, God gathered for His sake out of the world, a Church or body of believers in covenant with Himself, as Israel was of old; that He admits us into this Church by a simple but solemn ordinance, so far resembling circumcision that it is an outward rite, freely bestowed on those who seek it for themselves and their children; yet differing from circumcision as the vehicle of far higher and more spiritual blessings, and as confined to no particular nation, but mercifully offered to all men.

The true remedy for any mistaken views on this or any other subject, at least in a sermon, which is necessarily short and should always mainly consist of exhortations to holiness, is to put it in as practical a light as possible. I will therefore, after calling your attention to the meaning of to-day's epistle, try to shew how the baptismal doctrine which it teaches involves (i) an urgent motive and

SERMON
XXXVIII.

1 Pet. iii.
21.

SERMON
XXXVIII. encouragement, (ii) a solemn responsibility, (iii) a strong tie of brotherhood with those around us ; and then we will conclude by noticing its perfect harmony with the doctrine that every individual soul must consciously turn to God, and can only be justified and accepted through faith in Jesus Christ.

Connection
and para-
phrase of
the epistle.

2. The very object for which the Apostle introduces the passage chosen for to-day's epistle proves that a due appreciation of our baptism will be by God's blessing the surest help to a spiritual and holy life. He has been preaching that we shall be saved by faith and not by the works of the law.

Rom. v. 1
ff. 18.
vi. 1.

He has told us that by Christ's *righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto justification*. He fears that this merciful doctrine may be abused, and that since *where sin abounded under Adam, grace has abounded much more under Christ*, therefore some may venture to continue in sin, in order that this grace may be more magnified by their pardon and acceptance. Such a thought, he says, is impious, for we are made partakers of that grace by baptism, and the very meaning of that ordinance is that we are dead to sin, and walk in a new life consecrated

v. 20.

Rom. vi. 3. to God. *Know ye not, he says, that all we who were baptized into union with Jesus Christ were by baptism brought into a participation of His death? Well then, we were buried with Him by means of our baptism into conformity with His death, for this very purpose, that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious and almighty power of the Father, thus also we,*

who are baptized, should walk in newness of life. SERMON XXXVIII.
*For if we have grown together, and become intimately 5.
 and increasingly united with the likeness of His
 death, we shall be also with the likeness of His Resur-
 rection, recollecting this, that our old man, our former 6.
 sinful self, was at our baptism crucified with Him,
 in order that the body in which sin rules, might be
 rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves
 to sin: for he that is dead is no longer subject to sin 7.
 as a master: that is, as a dead man is acquitted from
 all human obligations, so one who has died to sin
 is freed from its guilt and bondage. Now if in 8.
 baptism we died with Christ, we believe that we shall
 also live with Him in holiness, knowing that Christ 9.
 being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no
 more dominion over Him, for the death which He died, 10.
 unto sin He died once after all, having after His death
 no more temptation to sin, nor feeling its guilt as He
 did in Gethsemane, but the life which He liveth, He
 liveth unto God, in glory. Thus, after the same manner 11.
 as Christ, reckon ye also yourselves dead indeed unto
 sin, and freed from its slavery, but alive unto God, in
 virtue of your union with Jesus Christ our Lord.*

3. i. And now consider how strong a motive for Baptism a
 motive for
 holiness.
 holiness is supplied by such teaching as this. Some-
 times men excuse their ungodliness by the plea
 that God has not given them sufficient grace to turn
 to Him, and that as their salvation is His work,
 they must wait for His call: or they complain of the
 want of excited feelings and inward experiences to

- SERMON
 XXXVIII. which some can appeal as proofs that they are God's children. But the apostles say that God has called us, and adopted us into His family, and permits us for Christ's sake to approach Him as our Father. And they rest this assurance, not on feelings which may delude us, but on an actual covenant with God sealed in our baptism. All their teaching is in harmony with Christ's own gracious words, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained (or appointed) you that ye should go and bring forth fruit*; and the inference which they draw from this election and appointment is the same as
- Joh. xv. 16. *ἐθῆκα.* *Abide in me, and I in you...he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.* Thus St Paul is speaking to all members of the Corinthian church when he says, *By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.* He tells all the Colossian Christians that they were *buried with Christ with baptism*, and then exhorts them, first generally, as risen with Him,
- 1 Cor. xii. 13. *to seek those things that are above*, and afterwards,
- Col. ii. 12. *dividing them into different classes, enjoins each to perform his special duties, addressing first wives, then husbands, then children, then fathers, then slaves, and lastly masters, all as baptized persons and therefore as children of God, members of Christ, heirs of the kingdom of heaven, called to holiness, purity, obedience, and the due discharge of every obligation both to God and man. So again having*

told the Ephesians that they are *all called in one hope* SERMON XXXVIII.
of their calling, that there is *one Lord, one faith, one*
baptism for all, and that all *must be followers* (or Eph. iv. 4.
imitators) of God, because they are His *dear children*, 5. v. 1, 21
 he exhorts in like manner wives, husbands, children,
 fathers, slaves, and masters to *submit themselves one*
to another in the fear of God. Nor let any one
 imagine that the Church of Christ in those early
 days consisted of men whom we in our modern lan-
 guage should call converted. It was then polluted
 by sin, as it is now. The apostles baptized all who
 professed their belief in the Lord Jesus, and declared Acts xvi.
 themselves ready to be guided by His precepts, and 15, 33
 when they desired it, their households also, doubt-
 less including, as we have just seen, their children,
 for our Lord had graciously called infants to receive
 His blessing, declaring that *of such is the kingdom* Mark x.
of God. Baptism was not to be the crown and 14.
 completion of a long course of Christian instruction,
 but rather its foundation; men were to be first re-
 ceived into the new covenant, and then trained up
 in all the holiness to which that covenant pledged
 them. This was the parting direction of our Lord Him-
 self, *Go ye and teach*, or rather *make disciples of, all*
nations, by baptizing them in the Name of the Father Matt. xxviii. 19,
and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, [and then] 20.
by teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have
commanded you. When the jailor at Philippi was
 suddenly struck with fear of God's judgements and
 anxiously enquired after the means of salvation, the

SERMON
XXXVIII.
Acts xvi.
30—34.

1 Cor. i.
2, 4.
1 Pet. ii.
9.
1 Cor. v.
vi. 18. xv.
1 Pet. iv.
15.
Heb. xii.
16.
Eph. v. 5.
Col. iii. 8.

1 Cor. iii.
9.

Heb. xii.
22 ff.

word of the Lord was simply declared to him, and when he consented to *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*, he and all his were *straightway baptized in the same hour of the night*, when there certainly had been no time for careful instruction in the details of Christian life. So too we find that among those who are spoken of as *called to be saints* and as *enriched by the grace of God*, as *a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people*, were men who fell into great and grievous sins of practice and errors of belief, evil doers, busybodies, nay even thieves and fornicators and deniers of the Resurrection, that all required to be warned against many wicked habits which clung to them from their heathen days, *falsehood, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of their mouth*. Then, as now, the tares and wheat were growing together, yet Christ's apostles regard the whole field as *God's husbandry*, and address all the baptized as Christ's people. Therefore now also there is no one here who must not regard his baptism as his chief motive to holiness, because he was therein made a member of Christ who died for him; there is no one who may not claim his share in the blessed assurance, *Ye are come unto mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the*

blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than SERMON XXXVIII.
that of Abel.

ii. But, brethren, as there is no one who may Baptism involves responsibility.
not claim this encouragement, so there is no one who
must not take heed to the awful warning which fol-
lows, *See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh...we* Heb. xii.
shall not escape, if we turn away from Him that 25, 29.
speaketh from heaven...for our God is a consuming
fire. If we are baptized in order that we may be
holy, if baptism was meant to be a fountain of
grace, by which we should be nourished and strength-
ened till we grow up *to the measure of the stature of* Eph. iv. 13.
the fulness of Christ, what must be said of us if we
are doing *despite to the Spirit of grace?* Of a wicked Heb. x. 29.
Christian it is doubly and trebly true, that unless he
turns to Christ he shall *die in his sins*. If baptism Joh. viii.
is a motive and a privilege, it is also a deep respon-
sibility. ^{24.} So we are invariably reminded. Sins of the
body are spoken of with horror, because our bodies
are *the temples of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in* I Cor. vi. 15, 19.
us; because by such sins we *take the members of*
Christ, and make them the members of a harlot. The
baptized person cannot if he would degrade himself
to the position of the heathen¹: he has received the
seed of a new life: if he sins, he sins against know-
ledge, against opportunities; he may indeed sink into
a state of heathen wickedness, but it will only be to
invoke against himself the righteous judgement, *that* Luke xii.
servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not ^{47.}

¹ Keble's *Christian Year*. Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

SERMON *himself, neither did according to His will, shall be*
XXXVIII. *beaten with many stripes.* Nor let him say that he is not responsible for his baptism, that it was administered in his infancy, that he was pledged without his own consent to a stricter life than he desired or is able to lead. He was only pledged to that life which it is the duty of all men to realize, and to the excellence of which conscience and reason testify. Every one is bound to seek for light, to welcome it, to use it, to walk in it. We must no more declare that we do not wish for God's spiritual light, than we must put out our bodily eyes, or destroy our natural life. We are God's children by creation, and if He calls us to be His children in a yet closer and truer sense by adoption and grace, we cannot escape from a responsibility which is in fact our truest happiness, and from the duty of fulfilling that nature which was created in His image, but polluted by the wiles of His enemy.

*Baptism a
 bond of
 brother-
 hood.*

iii. And this leads me to remind you of the firm ground which the Sacrament of Baptism affords on which to rest the brotherhood of all believers in Christ, the testimony which it bears against the narrow views which make the bond of union between Christians a mere participation in certain opinions, and the purely selfish doctrine that religion is simply and solely a matter between each man's soul and God. Christianity claims to be a catholic religion, because it enters into all the elements of human life, and sanctifies all the bonds which unite us to each

other as members of a family, of a neighbourhood, of a nation. To these close and sacred ties it adds another yet closer and more sacred, which extends our sympathies far beyond the widest of these limits, and joins nations and races together in a holy brotherhood. In that solemn rite in which we were made members of Christ, we were also made members one of another, all united in one divine family, taught to approach in faith and love one Father through one Elder Brother, sealed by one Spirit, called to partake in a common hope, and to share a common responsibility. Baptism into the Name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, should deliver us from sectarian animosity, and from fleeting forms of human opinion, as well as from sin. We should learn from it to regard all baptized Christians as our brethren in Christ, and therefore to watch for opportunities for arousing them to a sense of their high calling, even though we must sometimes turn away from them with sorrow, and obey the apostle's command, to have no dealing with those who dishonour the Christian name. SERMON
XXXVIII.

1 Cor. v.
11.

4. And now it only remains that I should protest against the conclusion, that because we believe in the blessings and responsibilities of baptism, therefore we deny the necessity of a change of heart and character, or attribute to an outward rite that power of sanctification which must be the gradual work of Christ's Spirit on each individual soul. Baptism is emphatically a new birth, but as infancy is not man-

*Baptism
not to be
confounded
with conversion to
God.*

SERMON
XXXVIII.

1 Cor. xv.
34.

hood, so a new birth unto righteousness is not the complete and conscious attainment of righteousness. Every baptized person must realize and appropriate his baptismal privileges: he must consciously pass from death to life: he must *awake to righteousness and sin not*, his heart must be converted from the love of sin and self to the love of God and his brethren. Sometimes, though such cases are the exceptions rather than the rule of God's spiritual working, a Christian may grow up from his very baptism in God's faith and fear; his whole life, from childhood to old age, may be a constant advance in holiness, so that he cannot remember any definite change from sin to righteousness, distinct from his recollections of the first dawn of conscience and reason. Sometimes again, though such cases also are exceptional rather than regular, the Spirit of God comes down suddenly like a thunderbolt on the careless sinner, who has utterly forgotten that he is a partaker of the baptismal covenant, and opens his eyes to his real state, to the destruction which is hurrying him away, and the salvation which is offered to him in Christ Jesus. More commonly a man can look back to a somewhat gradual conversion, to a time when he was heedless and sinful, to a growth of better thoughts and desires, ending perhaps by some marked crisis and event which determined him *to turn to God*. Brethren, we know not what is the case with each of you. Some here present are probably still careless and ungodly, some are hesitating to turn their steps de-

cidedly in the narrow way which leads to heaven, SERMON XXXVIII. while some have entered on the road, but are distressed and made anxious by their frequent falls. But let none disbelieve St. Paul's words that they are *buried with Christ by baptism into death*, in order that they may walk in newness of life. Let none doubt that they are God's children, and that He desires their highest good. If any one question this, let him read with attention and prayer the parable of the prodigal son. Surely this teaches us, just as the Lord's prayer does, that the starting point of the Christian life is not our alienation from God, but our recognition of Him as our Father. The heedless youth who wasted his substance in riotous living, had wandered, as we have, from a loving father and a happy home. His father was estranged from him, his home was closed to him, as long as he remained joined to a citizen of the strange country in which he Luke xv. 13, 15. sojourned, and was content to feed his swine. But when he returned with the penitent cry for forgiveness, he did not hesitate to use the sacred plea of sonship as his title for restoration, and the claim was readily and joyfully allowed. And shall not we, brethren, when we unhappily wander from God, come back with shame, yet with confidence, to His mercy seat, and cry unto Him, *Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight*, I have forgotten that I was called by baptism out of that world which lieth 1 Joh. v. 19. in wickedness, and brought into the number of Thy chosen people. *I am no more worthy to be called*

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XXXVIII.

Thy son, yet do Thou, for Christ's sake, have mercy upon me, and help me so that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth I may not serve sin. And if we do so approach Him in humble prayer, we cannot for a moment doubt that He who has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, will keep us by His own power through faith unto salvation.

DARJEELING, 1862.

XXXIX. SHAME THE FRUIT OF SIN.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ROM. VI. 21.

*What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?
For the end of those things is death.*

SEVERAL of the ancient and most of the modern SERMON
XXXIX.
expositors of Scripture, including the great reformers
Luther and Melancthon, explain this verse in a
manner slightly different from our English trans-
lators. Omitting the word *in*, they place the inter-
rogation after *what fruit had ye then?* instead of *Change in
the punc-
tuation of
the text.*
ashamed, and understand the whole verse as contain-
ing (1) a question, *What fruit had ye then?* i. e. at
the time when ye were the servants of sin: (2) an
answer to the question, *Things whereof ye are now
ashamed:* and (3) the reason of the answer, *For the
end of those things is death.*

I cannot but think that this little alteration,
which corresponds to the original at least quite as
well as our translation, adds to the passage great
force, and draws from it a new depth of meaning.

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XXXIX.

It seems too to make the connection of the apostle's words clear and precise. As we commonly read the passage, the clause *for the end of those things is death*, hangs on but loosely to the previous sentence, whereas, according to the change now suggested, we learn that we ought to be ashamed of the fruit of our past lives because their natural end is death. It has been urged moreover with considerable force that the word *fruit* in the New Testament is generally used, not of the wages or reward which a man receives for his conduct, but rather of that conduct itself, of his feelings, actions and habits, considered as the result of his principles. The man himself, that is, his mind and disposition, is regarded as the tree, his deeds as the fruit which the tree puts forth according to its nature. You will remember our Lord's words : *either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit.* So too St Paul says that *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace*; and in another place he desires *fruit* (that is, good works) *which may abound to the account of his converts.* And only a few verses after the text we read, *Ye have your fruit unto holiness.* So that both the connection of the clauses, and the use of language, support the slight change of translation which I have mentioned. But we shall understand the question more clearly if we take a rapid survey of the whole passage chosen as to-day's epistle.

Rom. v. 1. . 2. The apostle has been speaking on the great

theme of man's free pardon and acceptance with God for the sake of Jesus Christ, and he is afraid lest his language should seem to sanction the fatal error that sin has therefore become a matter of comparative indifference. Accordingly he shews that a life of sin is necessarily incompatible with a life of faith, and among other proofs of this, argues that a life of sin is a life of bondage, and that those who lead such a life are slaves. From such slavery they are delivered by Christ, and are by Him transferred from the service of sin to the service of righteousness, which is in truth the highest freedom. At the beginning of to-day's epistle he explains that this thought of bondage is a metaphor which he uses to make his meaning clearer to his readers. *I use a human comparison, he says, on account of your natural weakness, which makes you slow to apprehend spiritual things: for I say that as ye once rendered up your members, that is, all your faculties and powers whether of body and mind, to be servants of impurity and lawlessness, sinning against your own selves by uncleanness, and against God by disobedience, and were led on by those sins to ever fresh lawlessness, even so now you must render up your members as servants to the principle of righteousness, which leads to entire sanctification. It is true that when ye were servants of sin, ye were in one sense free, for ye were not under the restraints of righteousness. Well then, was this a happy life which ye were then leading? Did it repay you? What fruit*

SERMON
XXXIX.
Para-
phrase of
the epistle.
vi. 1.

SERMON *had ye at that time? Deeds whereof ye are now*
XXXIX. *ashamed, because the end of such deeds is death.*

22. *But now, having been made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have a very different fruit, a fruit tending to sanctification, of which the end is*
 23. *everlasting life. For death is the wages of sin; the ruin which follows upon iniquity is fairly earned, like the pay of a soldier or hired labourer, but the Christian's reward is not earned, but granted by God's free bounty; eternal life is the gift of God to His true soldiers and servants in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Enquiry
suggested
by the
epistle.*

3. You will now, I think, see more plainly the force of the proposed change in the punctuation and translation of the verse before us, and so be able to appreciate St Paul's meaning. He begs his readers to ask themselves fairly what fruit they reap from a life of wickedness. Is it not such that in their better moments they are heartily ashamed of it; habits, tempers, feelings and actions, of which they blush to think themselves guilty, since they know that their end is death? Brethren, this enquiry is of the deepest and most melancholy significance to us all, and it will be well therefore for us to take it home to our own hearts, and to consider (i) what is the fruit of evil inclinations, and (ii) what is the necessary end of such indulgence.

*Fruit of
self-indul-
gence.*

i. First then, what fruit, or result, now remains to us from days which we have wasted in sin, and in doing our own pleasure only? Nothing, except

things of which we are now ashamed. This thought must sometimes press upon the conscience whether we have really repented of the past or not. For even if God has not yet roused us to a true sense of our duty to Him, and of His mercy to us in Christ Jesus, still the merest worldly considerations, common prudence, weariness of a useless life, or at any rate the occasional aspirations after better things, which are never wholly wanting till we become utterly hardened in evil, will produce in us a sense of dissatisfaction, a desire for something higher and better than a life merely devoted to our own interest and advancement, if not to reckless pleasure or self-indulgence. But if on the other hand a man's conscience is awakened, so that he longs for improvement, and has been taught by God's Spirit to *work out* Phil. ii. 12. *his own salvation with fear and trembling*, then most surely he is ashamed of that fruit which he once reaped with thoughtless self-satisfaction, but which now only remains to vex and hinder him, in the shape of some miserable habit or inclination hard to conquer, of indolence, perhaps, resisting all attempts at exertion, of selfishness or passion constantly thwarting his Christian efforts, of unholy thoughts springing up unbidden in his heart, of a thousand evil recollections polluting the soul which he desires to consecrate to God. We must all only too often have reason to be ashamed of these corrupt remnants of our past sinfulness, blighted and cankered fruits, which by our own perversity we have brought to

SERMON
XXXIX.

SERMON
XXXIX.Matt. vi.
2.

maturity, and which the tree still bears from time to time, in spite of our tardy efforts so to cultivate and prune it, that it may be adorned by a healthier produce. The question and answer seem to remind us of those words of our blessed Lord, which are surely among the most awful in the whole Bible, *Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.* He says this, you will remember, of the *hypocrites who, when they do their alms, sound a trumpet before them in the synagogues and the streets, that they may be seen of men.* There are many classes of persons, who, under the influence of various temptations, seek to obtain their reward in this world. And how miserable is the reward which follows upon their efforts! Take the case of which our Lord speaks, the case of any one who devotes his life to winning popular applause, and gratifying his own vanity. How grievous, how degrading, to be always dependent on the changing breath of public approbation, to be reduced to shape our course always according to the popular wish: what humiliation it involves, what fickleness of opinion and uncertainty of action, what a loss of self-respect, what a check to any growth in wisdom and goodness! Or if we set our affections on earthly wealth and a high position in life, undoubtedly it is quite possible that by vigorous efforts we may *have our reward.* Yet here again we reap as part of that reward the bitter fruit of worldliness or avarice, habits and desires which we cannot shake off, which choke within us all holier aspirations, and stifle the love of

God and the hope of heaven. Whatever be the earthly advantage on which our hearts are fixed, we may very probably obtain it, for perseverance whether in a good or bad cause generally succeeds. But still if ever we come calmly to consider what is the abiding recompense of our anxious labours, the fruit of all our selfish exertions to obtain our worldly object, we shall too often be driven to acknowledge ourselves thoroughly ashamed of it; for the end of these things is death.

ii. And this leads us to consider the reason for which we should be ashamed of the fruit of an evil life. It is explained by more than one similar passage of Holy Scripture, where the thought of eternal ruin is united, or the thought of eternal life contrasted with that of shame. Thus in this very epistle to the Romans we are told that *hope* (that is the hope of heaven) *maketh not ashamed*, and again in another place, partly quoted from Isaiah's prophecies, we read, *Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-block and rock of offence, and whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed*, that is, by failing to attain His promised blessings. But perhaps the best known and most striking passage of all is from the book of Daniel: *many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*. Nor is it difficult to understand the connection between *shame* and *death*, whatever be the meaning which we attach to the latter word. For if we take it of natural

SERMON
XXXIX.

End of self-indulgence.

Rom. v. 5.

Rom. ix.

33.
1a. viii. 14.

Dan. xii.

SERMON
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Ps. xxxix.
6.
Eccl. i. 2,
14.
xi. 8.
xii. 7.

death, that death of the body which awaits us all, we shall acknowledge that the shortness, the uncertainty, the utterly transitory character of all worldly advantages, furnish a strong reason why a wise and thoughtful man should be ashamed of devoting to them too much time and labour. The ambitious man, the covetous man, the lover of pleasure, the vain hunter after popular admiration, the silly trifler who has no object in life at all, sometimes feel that they are *walking in a vain shadow and disquieting themselves in vain, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, for if they live many years and rejoice in them all, yet still they must remember the days of darkness that they are many, when the dust shall return to earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.* They may well feel shame at their own shortsighted folly in sacrificing all their noblest hopes, and their many opportunities for helping their brethren, to the acquisition of some pleasure or advantage which sickness or accident may at any moment interrupt, or to heaping up wealth which they cannot themselves long enjoy, and which their children after them, for whose earthly interests they have sedulously laboured, but whose highest good they have shamefully neglected, may perhaps abuse to the ruin both of body and soul. Or if we attach to death that sense in which the apostle probably here used it, and understand the word of spiritual and eternal death, still more overpowering is the reason here given why we should be ashamed

of the fruit of the past. For will it not be a cause of bitter and heartburning shame hereafter, ought not the mere prospect of such an end of life to be cause of shame and contrition now, if we, who have been brought *to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God*, we who have received the knowledge of Christ's Redemption, and the promise of Christ's Spirit, should be at last excluded from our inheritance, because we have chosen evil instead of good, and have preferred a few years of heedless pleasure and corrupt self-seeking, to the love and obedience of our Saviour? We may be quite sure, however we may now dally with sin, that we shall be at last ashamed of the fruit of our ungodliness. We shall be ashamed of it in the hour of bodily death, when we feel that those fancied advantages for which we sacrificed so much can be enjoyed no more for ever. Just as men and women are ashamed when they look back on some childish folly, and wonder how they could have ever taken pleasure in so unworthy a trifle, so shall we be ashamed of worldly selfishness and wasted opportunities, when we stand on the threshold of our eternal existence. And far more surely shall we be ashamed of these things in the terrible hour of most just judgement, when we are brought face to face with that never dying death which, in the very midst of our heedless indifference, we surely knew would be their end.

4. But, brethren, let us take to ourselves in conclusion a word of comfort and encouragement. *The good element in shame.*

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XXXIX.

Shame is not always merely evil, and if we now feel it when we look back upon the past, it may well, by God's blessing, produce in us *a godly sorrow working repentance to salvation not to be repented of.*

2 Cor. vii.
10.

And if it does, our course is clear. Our Lord says

Joh. viii.
11.

to all true penitents, *Go, and sin no more.*

"Not backward be our glances cast,
But forward to our Father's home."

We are now ashamed of these things, we know that their end is death, let us renounce them for ever. Let us perform our work in a new spirit, and take a our guide a new principle. If any one is called to such a position in life that he is necessarily engrossed with many earthly cares, let him leaven all his work by the love of Christ, let him seek his brethren's good rather than his own. If to another a quieter and less public occupation is assigned, let him remember that God seeth not as man seeth, and that the simplest duty conscientiously fulfilled is for Christ's sake no less acceptable in His sight, than those tasks which are the noblest of all in human estimation. The secret struggle against sin, the honest endeavour to fashion a life according to Christ's pattern, the faithful performance of the humblest service for our brethren, are as precious in God's judgement as the successful labours of the great and wise statesman, permitted to complete a mighty work, and then laid in the sepulchre of kings and heroes, amidst the tears of a nation rescued by his magnanimous exertions from peril and

disgrace¹. God requires each of us to work for the benefit of others and for the sanctification of our own souls, to resist all those inclinations which we know to be shameful and which end in death, to free ourselves from their bondage, and to become servants of righteousness. By thus walking in newness of life we shall not indeed earn or merit His reward, for our weak and most imperfect efforts can never win for ourselves an infinity of blessings, but we shall unite ourselves more and more closely to Jesus Christ ; we shall, according to God's will, *bring forth fruit unto holiness*, we shall prove ourselves more and more truly to be His children, and so shall receive from Him that gift of life eternal, which He bestows upon all who obey His call to come out of the world, and who open their hearts to the Spirit of His Son.

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XXXIX.

¹ Lord Canning was buried in Westminster Abbey on June 21 1862.

DARJEELING, 1862.

XL. THE CRY OF ABBA, FATHER.

EIGHTE SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ROM. VIII. 15.

Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

SERMON
XL.
Meanings
of the
phrase
"Sons of
God."

Acts xvii.
28.

Acts xvii.
29.

THERE are four senses¹ in which the phrases *children of God* and *sons of God* are used in Scripture, and each degree of sonship is intended to lead up to that next above it. In the first and lowest sense we are children of God by creation. In this use of the term all men are included, Jews, heathen, and Christians alike. Thus St Paul, in addressing the idolatrous Athenians, says to them, *We also are His offspring*, and although he is quoting from a heathen poet, yet, unless he had accepted the truth of the quotation, he would not have founded an argument upon it, as he does immediately afterwards by adding, *forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is*

¹ See this explained at greater length in Sadler's *Second Adam*, ch. xiii.

like unto gold, or silver, or stone. Secondly, Christians are the children of God by baptism, as when St Paul says even to the perverse and carnal Galatians, *Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* Gal. iii. 26, 27. Thirdly, we are sons of God by bearing His image, by fulfilling our baptismal covenant, by opening our hearts to the guidance of the Spirit. Thus we read in to-day's epistle, *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;* and St John says, *that whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, and overcometh the world.* Rom. viii. 14, 1 Joh. iii. 9, v. 4. Lastly, and perfectly, we shall be God's children when we are glorified together with Christ. So says our Lord Himself, *They that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead...are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.* Luke xx. 35, 36. And now mark the connection between these four senses. A man is born into the world that he may be brought into covenant with God; and brought into covenant with God in order that he may walk through the grace of Christ's Spirit in faithful obedience to His will; and the end of this faith and obedience is that he will inherit all things, and that at the last great day God will claim him as His son for ever. Rev. xxi. 7.

2. Two Sundays ago the passage chosen for the epistle referred to the second of these degrees of sonship. We were told that we were *buried with* *Context of the epistle.*

SERMON *Christ* by baptism into fellowship with His death,
XL. and urged to remember our baptismal obligation,

Rom. vi. 3, and to *walk in newness of life*. To-day the epistle,

4. chosen from the same book of Scripture, carries us a step further, and speaks of the third degree of sonship, the privilege of crying *Abba, Father*, under the teaching of the Spirit of adoption. If we compare the sixth chapter of St Paul's letter to the Romans (from which the epistle was chosen two Sundays ago) with the eighth chapter, from which to-day's is selected, we shall plainly see that the Apostle has

Rom. v. 6—21. past from one subject to the other. For the former passage followed upon a statement of God's exceeding mercy and love to us in Christ, and formed part of an exhortation to accept it, and fulfil its gracious purpose, by casting off altogether the bondage of sin.

Rom. vii. 14—23. But the eighth chapter is introduced by a description of the spiritual struggles of one who is labouring with all his power to escape from this slavery, of one who has bitter experience of the terrible conflict between *the law of God* and *the law of sin in his members*, and who, after feeling for a long time that

vii. 18. *to will is present with him, but how to perform that which is good he finds not*, at last throws himself on

vii. 24. God's mercy with the despairing cry, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Then it is that he finds safety in a heartfelt recognition of Jesus Christ as his Saviour: he appropriates His salvation to himself consciously and willingly: he feels that Christ has died not only for

the sins of the whole world, but for his own sins: *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees him from the law of sin and death; he walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit; and as he felt of old that to be carnally minded was death, so now he knows that to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* And then St Paul proceeds in the epistle of to-day to entreat all those who are made children of God and members of Christ by baptism, to realize this higher sonship, this conscious membership, to renounce the flesh and to be led by the Spirit.

3. *Brethren*, he says, using throughout the passage language of more than usual solemnity and tenderness, *we, as those for whom Christ died and rose again, owe fealty, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh, [but to the Spirit], for if ye live according to the flesh, gratifying your own inclinations and seeking your own pleasure, ye will die, death is the certain and natural end of such a course; but if by the Spirit ye slay the deeds of the body, those habits and practices which are prompted by the natural unregenerate man, ye shall live; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, and enabled under His guidance to slay the deeds of the body, these, and no others, are the true sons of God, and therefore shall never die. For when ye became Christians ye did not receive over again the spirit of bondage which leads to fear, so as to be kept in a state of slavery or brought back to it, but ye received the Spirit, whose effect is adoption into God's family,*

SERMON
XL.
Rom. viii.
1, 2, 4.

viii. 6.

Para-
phrase.
Rom. viii.
12.
(cf. ver. 11.)

13.

14.

15.

SERMON *and in whom we are taught and enabled to approach*
 XL. *Him with the love and confidence of dear children,*

16. *and to cry, Abba, Father. The Holy Spirit Himself*
testifies to our inmost spirit and conscience that we are

17. *in deed and in truth children of God: but if we are*
children, then we are also heirs; heirs of God, since
He is our Father who gives us the inheritance, and

(Heb. i. 2.) *joint-heirs with Christ, "whom He has appointed heir*
of all things," but who condescends to share His in-

(Heb. ii. 11.) *heritance with us, being "not ashamed to call us*
brethren." But this joint-heirship is conditional, we

are only joint-heirs with Christ, if we are suffering
with Him, resisting sin and temptation for His sake,
bearing our cross as He did, submitting thankfully to
all God's dispensations, that we may also be glorified
with Him, by going through the needful discipline
which prepares us for glory.

Practical
lessons.
 Heb. iv. 12.

4. Brethren, these are most heart-searching words, *piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of every heart in this congregation.* And now, though with a deep consciousness of unworthiness to guide your thoughts to so sublime and heavenly a theme, I will ask you to consider (i) how we must attain the state here described, and (ii) what are the signs of it. It will then remain for every one to apply the subject, by considering in the secrecy of his own heart whether he recognizes in himself any of those signs, or even their faint outlines and beginnings.

i. To the question, how we attain the state here described by the apostle, the answer is very plain: solely through the atonement and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the work which He has already accomplished for the redemption of the world, and through the work which He is still carrying on by His Spirit in the hearts of those who have been brought into covenant with Him. We read in the epistle to the Hebrews that when Christ came into the world to redeem men from sin by a better and costlier sacrifice than *the blood of bulls and goats*, He declared His mission in the language of ancient prophecy, *Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God*. And if we turn to the context of the words in which His atoning work was thus prefigured, we see that it was directly connected with the spiritual renewal of our souls by the true knowledge of God as our faithful and righteous Father. *I delight to do Thy will, O my God, yea Thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest. I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart: I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy loving kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation.* Thus Christ, having as Man perfectly performed God's will, and so by the eternal Spirit fitted Himself to be a spotless sacrifice to God, having taken on Himself the burden of our iniquity, and realized its misery in the agony of the garden, completed the work of redemption. and

SERMON
XL.

*How do we
attain true
sonship?*

Heb. x.

4-7.

Ps. xl.

6-11.

Heb. ix.

14.

SERMON XL. propitiation by making *His soul* (or life) *an offering for sin* on Calvary, a *ransom for all sinners*. Thus
 Is. liii. 10. He removed the barriers which justice had placed
 Matt. xx. 28. between God and man: having taken our nature
 1 Tim. ii. 6. upon Him, He *fulfilled all righteousness*, and bore our
 Matt. iii. 15. sins, took them away, carried them up, in *His own*
 1 Pet. ii. 24. body to the tree, and so He has enabled all who share
 See Ser- mon xxvi. the nature which He thus redeemed to *enter into the*
 Heb. x. 19. holiest, through the new and living way which He has
 Heb. ix. 14. consecrated for them, purging their conscience from
 dead (or wicked) works to serve the living God, and so
 fitting them for spiritual worship. And then He
 declared in the great congregation that His Father
 was their Father, who though alienated from them
 by their sins, yet had ever loved them, and yearned
 over them, and had Himself provided this costly
 sacrifice by which His holiness was satisfied, and
 through which they might rest with full confidence
 on *His faithfulness and His salvation*. Brethren, it
 is by accepting this invitation, by opening our hearts
 to this declaration of our reconciled Father's love, by
 coming to Him in faith through the blood of Jesus,
 and submitting our perverse and erring wills to the
 guidance of His Spirit, that we must become the
 true sons of God, and partake in the blessings and
 comforts which He has in store for those who, like
 the prodigal, seek refuge from the temptations and
 troubles of the world in the home which He has
 provided for His children.

*Signs of
sonship.*

ii. And as soon as we turn to the signs of true

sonship, its connection with the sufferings by which Christ expiated and purged our sins is manifest from the very language of the passage. The Spirit of adoption teaches us to cry, *Abba, Father*. The words at once recall to our memory the awful scene of Gethsemane. For *Abba, Father*, were the actual words in which He offered up prayers and supplications to God with strong crying and tears, when He was struggling with the bitter burden of our sin, which the Lord had laid upon Him. *Abba* itself is merely the word for "my Father" in the language spoken by the Jews of our Lord's time; but it seems to have been regarded as expressing a very deep and tender feeling, as almost equivalent to "dear Father¹," and it was probably joined by Christians of all nations to their own word for Father, when they were addressing God with special fervency, from a "reverent and affectionate remembrance of Him who taught and enabled us truly to call God our Father²." And thus we are at once led to two signs that the Spirit of adoption is really guiding and pervading our hearts.

a. The first is an increased sense of comfort and happiness in prayer: a true belief that we are addressing a Father: *the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God*. We ought, slowly perhaps and dimly, but still really, to be conscious from our own experience that communion with our heavenly Father is a great and

SERMON
XL.

Heb. v. 7.

Is. liii. 6.

Comfort in
prayer.

¹ Thus Luther translates it, *lieber Vater*.

² Ellioott on Gal. iv. 6.

SERMON
XL.

Is. xlii. 3.
Mat. xii.
20.
Ezek. xiii.
22.

precious blessing. We ought to derive from our prayers positive strength and consolation. They ought actually to help us in conquering temptation, to console us in trouble, to deepen our faith in Christ, to intensify our longing for true holiness, to animate our hope of heaven. They ought to become more fervent, more frequent than they have been. Doubtless we must here speak warily, and not venture presumptuously to lay down universal rules; lest we *break the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax*, or make *the heart of the righteous sad which God hath not made sad*. For some persons from their natural temperament can concentrate their attention on one subject for a longer time than others, some again are more occupied by the worldly business which, having been assigned to them by God, must be punctually and conscientiously discharged. Two men, therefore, who open their hearts to God's Holy Spirit with equal readiness, may differ in the time which they actually devote to prayer. But all who are led by that Spirit must feel more and more truly the power of prayer, and more and more desire to be often alone with God, and to beseech Him as their dear Father to help them for the sake of His Son. And to all the thought of their union with God in Christ must become, if I may so speak, more and more natural, rising up spontaneously to check them and save them from evil, even when they cannot deliberately seek Him in definite and formal prayer.

b. And these words, *Abba, Father*, spoken by

Christ in the hour of deepest sorrow, remind us of SERMON XL. another sign of true sonship. He suffered and prayed Bearing and died to make us one with Himself, and to leave our cross. us an example that we should follow His steps. There- 1 Pet. ii. 21. fore, when the Spirit of adoption teaches us to cry, *Abba, Father*, He reminds us that we also must suffer with Christ, *that we may be also glorified together.* And thus in another passage closely resembling this, the Spirit through whom we cry *Abba, Father*, is called not the Spirit of adoption, but *the Spirit of Gal. iv. 6.* *God's Son sent forth into our hearts.* Adoption into God's family leads to true sonship, to union with Christ. As He came to do God's will, so must His brethren be content to do it also. As they realize more and more their connection with God as their dear and loving Father, they will feel more and more ready to accept in faith all His dispensations, even though among them are chastisements grievous to be borne. They will be more and more deeply assured, in spite of the clouds which may from time to time obscure their earthly happiness, or even the difficulties which may still hamper their struggles against sin, that *He who spared not His own Son, but deli- Rom. viii. 32.* *vered Him up for us all, will with Him also freely* *give us all things* which are needful for our perseverance in spiritual life and godliness. It is part of our calling as sons of God to be made one with the Elder Brother, in whom we are accepted by the Father. We must *know Him* as our Lord and Saviour by Phil. iii. 10. practical and experimental knowledge, and *the power*

SERMON XL. *of His Resurrection as quickening our souls, and the fellowship of His sufferings in our struggles and our*

Matt. xx. 22. *sorrows, drinking from the cup which He drank, baptized with the baptism with which He was baptized, and strengthened with the very same divine strength in which He endured affliction.*

Growth in holiness.

c. But you may think that I am dwelling too much on the evidence, sometimes no doubt uncertain, variable, even delusive, of feelings and inward experiences. And therefore I will remind you of one more sign of sonship, the most essential of all, without which all the rest are but vain imaginations, and with which no other deficiency need dishearten us. This sign is the gradual improvement of character, and progress in the Christian life. The Spirit of adoption is the Spirit of holiness: *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* Therefore, brethren, if you are in truth His children, you must be advancing in spiritual knowledge and practical goodness. You must find it easier and easier to resist and conquer temptation. To be tempted is the condition of humanity. Our Lord Himself was not exempt from the universal necessity. Evil thoughts must sometimes come into the hearts even of the advanced Christian; all are subject to the influence of bodily appetites, of natural feelings, of anger, of resentment, of a hundred inclinations which may seduce us from the narrow way which leads to life. But do we check them, do we allow them to obtain the mastery? Does the natu-

ral feeling of resentment at injustice done to ourselves, of anger at the sight of wickedness, pass into revenge, or malice, or unrestrained passion? Or if we have not quite succeeded in controlling ourselves, are we learning to do so more and more? Are we less selfish, more tender, more loving, firmer and more unwavering in doing our duty in all things? If we are, then the Spirit of God is teaching us, if not, then we still are wanting in the only sure evidence of His presence.

SERMON
XL.

5. Brethren, as I said, it is for myself and for each of you to make these inquiries of our own individual souls. The inquiry must be close, personal, searching. Most applicable to this subject are the words, *Every one shall bear his own burden: the heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.* At this point a general address to a whole congregation must cease, the help of a Christian minister or Christian friend can go no further, and each must ask himself whether he has entered into a living communion with God. Our reconciled Father is ever calling us: we are already united to Him by a double tie, the bond of creation and the bond of redemption; let us hasten to be His sons, in a yet higher sense, by bearing on our hearts and disposition the impress of our Saviour's character, that so we may receive at last the fulness of our inheritance, and be for ever partakers of His glory.

Individual
application
of the text.
Gal. vi. 5.
Prov. xiv.
10.

XLI. TEMPTATION.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

I COR. X. 13.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

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XLI.
*Context of
the epistle.*

WE learn from that portion of St Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians which contains this passage, that among the various dangers threatening the faith and constancy of the Christians in Corinth, one of the subtlest was the temptation to take part in the feasts and revels of their heathen friends, by which they would be almost certainly brought into a renewed connection with idolatry. Against this peril the apostle warns them in to-day's epistle, but he does not confine his admonition to the one danger of idolatry ; he speaks to them of temptation generally, its evils and its safeguards, and he even hints to them that it is not without its uses. The whole passage is full of most important instruction. We will first

I Cor. viii.
x. 27 ff.

paraphrase and explain it, and then I will ask you to consider the great subject of temptation, regarded as our appointed discipline, to which the whole of it tends. The apostle begins his exhortation by quoting the example of the Jews in their passage from Egypt to Canaan. He shews that they were under a dispensation closely resembling ours, that they had blessings analogous to our Sacraments, which, like them, typified the work of Him who is the fountain of all grace and blessing. Yet they fell into idolatry, they *lusted after evil things*, and so all but two perished in the wilderness by the various plagues and punishments with which God chastised them. And then the apostle applies this to the case of his weak converts at Corinth; he first warns them by this example against the danger of yielding to evil inclinations; and finally encourages them by the thought of God's fatherly love and promised aid, to struggle faithfully against the temptations which, in the nature of things, must beset their course. If you will follow me with open Bibles or Prayer-books, you will see these points more fully drawn out in the epistle itself.

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2. *Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant that all our fathers, whom God brought out of the land of Egypt, had privileges corresponding to yours. As you have been brought into Christ's Church by baptism, so they all by being under the cloud which overshadowed and accompanied the camp, and also by passing through the Red Sea, were baptized into*

Paraphrase.
1 Cor. x. 1.

(Cf. Num.
xiv. 14.)

SERMON *the dispensation of Moses. As in the Eucharist you*
XLI. 3. *partake of the body and blood of Christ, so they all*
 (Ex. xiv. 31.) *ate the same miraculous and typical manna, and all*
 4. *drank the same miraculous and typical¹ water, for*
 (Cf. Joh. vi. 50. vii. 37, 39-) *they drank from the rock which miraculously followed*
them throughout their wanderings with its refreshing
stream, and the rock was Christ.

I pause for a moment to remind you that there is nothing strange in the declaration that *the Rock was Christ*. We know from St John that *the Word*, who afterwards took our nature, and under the Name of Jesus Christ saved us from our sins, *was with God from the beginning*, that *all things were made by Him*, and that *in Him was life, and the life was the light of men*. Before He dwelt among us in the flesh, He guided and governed the world. The Jews are specially called *His own*, for over them He had specially ruled. He was the ever-present Lord of Israel, who led His people through the desert, and supplied them with heavenly food and drink: He was the *Rock who begat them, but of whom they were unmindful* in their murmuring and rebellion, *their Fortress and their Deliverer, their Buckler, the Horn of their salvation, and their high Tower*. As He was the Paschal Lamb, the High Priest, the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness, so was He "in a far higher sense than the actual cliffs of Hor or Horeb, the Rock which was always in view, with its shadow to protect and

¹ For *spiritual* in the sense of *typical*, see Rev. xi. 8.

its waters to refresh them, at the end no less than at the beginning of their long wanderings¹." SERMON
XLI.

But not with the greater part of them, St Paul 5. continues, in fact with Joshua and Caleb only, was God pleased, for all the rest were overthrown in the wilderness. And these things happened as examples and 6. figures to us, in order that we might not be, like them, lusters after evil things. And so, the apostle adds, 7. (turning now in anxious exhortation to his converts,) I beseech you not to become idolaters, as some of them were, as it is written in the book of Exodus, "the people (Ex. xxxii. sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to join in 6.) heathen dances and revelries." And let us not fall 8. into that sin of fornication which constantly accompanies idolatry, and was punished in the case of our forefathers by the death of three and twenty thousand men when they joined themselves to Baalpeor, and sin- (Num. xxv. 1, 9-) ned with the daughters of Moab. Neither let us tempt 9. Christ by going to the very verge of our Christian (Cf. Mat. iv. 7.) liberty, as some of them also tempted Him (you will notice here, brethren, another testimony to our Lord's pre-existence) by frequent acts of rebellion,

¹ Stanley *in loc.* He and Alford explain *the rock that followed* by the Jewish tradition that a fragment of Horeb detached itself from the mountain, and actually followed the people, pouring forth water when bidden to do so (Num. xx. 7). I have not adopted this view in the paraphrase, not because I think it impossible that St Paul should illustrate an argument by a Jewish tradition, but because this tradition is a very grotesque one, and because I cannot see the objection to the belief that the spiritual rock, &c. means "*the water following them out of the rock.*" (Grotius, Lightfoot, Estius, &c.)

SERMON and were destroyed by fiery serpents. Neither mur-
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10. mur ye against God's dispensations, and fancy that
(Num. xxi. 6.) your trials are too heavy to bear, as some of our fore-
(Num. xvi. 49.) fathers murmured, and were destroyed by the destroy-

11. ing angel of pestilence. Now all these things which happened to them were examples and warnings of the punishments which will befall us, who are living under
12. the final Christian dispensation. Be careful, then, and let him who fancies himself firm and stedfast in his Christian faith, take heed lest he fall through self-
13. confidence. Yet at the same time do not despair: by temptation God trains and educates us: no temptation has befallen you but such as all must expect; and God is your loving and faithful Father, who will not suffer you to be tempted above your powers of endurance, but will with the temptation also provide the means of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Practical
lessons.

3. The verse which concludes and sums up the teaching of the passage puts before us at once the necessity and the use of temptation. Let us (i) consider these; and then (ii) let us enquire into the means of escape by which God enables us to bear it.

i. By speaking of *such temptation as is common*
Use of temptation. to men, St Paul tells us that temptation is God's appointed discipline. The truth is put even more

James i.
12.

plainly before us by St James, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.* Doubtless we are taught to ask God not to lead us into temptation, and we must never run into it heedlessly, still less desire it, for if

we know our own weakness and sinfulness, we shall seek for safety, in the humility of self-distrust, rather than for victory, in the presumption of self-confidence. Still, though we may not court temptation, yet it is God's will that we should be subject to it, that we should learn to bear it, to resist it, to escape from it uninjured. For so only can our principles be tested, the sincerity of our faith proved, thus only can we know whether it will enable us to *overcome the world*. 1 Joh. v. 4.

We must not therefore complain, if we are assailed by temptation, any more than a soldier must complain if he is sent into danger. If there were no danger, where would be the soldier's reward, and if there were no temptation, where would be the Christian's crown? And as we must not murmur because we are tempted, so neither must we excuse ourselves for yielding to temptation by pleading the severity of the trial. The words of the text shew that such a plea is frivolous. *God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.* The temptation which conquered us was part of His appointed discipline, provided in wisdom and mercy by a faithful God and Father, who having entered into covenant with us through the Blood of His Son, designs to teach us lessons of self-control, and to lead us along a path often rugged, but never solitary, to that holiness which is the true end of our being. Had we therefore looked steadily around us and within us when danger was near, had we paused to think and pray before we acted, we should have found

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XLI. some *way of escape* from the peril which only assailed us by His permission. And so by passing unscathed through the fire of temptation we should have been purified and strengthened by our trial. Nor let any one think that this view of temptation

JAMES I. 13. and its uses is opposed to the words of St James, *Let no one say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.* It cannot be opposed to these words, for they immediately follow the declaration already quoted, *Blessed is the man who endureth temptation*, and therefore cannot have any meaning which contradicts the comforting assurance that temptation is ordained by God for our benefit. But what we do learn from them is this: Let no man, in a wicked spirit of fatalism, defend his sins by saying that God is the author of the temptation which has overcome him. God *has no experience of evil*¹, He is not its author, the sources of temptation are the devil, and the world around us, and our own wicked hearts, but God overrules it for our good, and uses it for our spiritual education; "for if there were no obstacle for the soul to contend against, there could not be that moral excellence which is the result of effort, and which is the highest good conceivable by our minds²." The uses of temptation are like

the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head:

¹ *ἀπειραγτος*, wrongly translated in the English Version of James I. 13, "not tempted of evil."

² Goldwin Smith, *Rational Religion*, &c. p. 56.

and both temptation and adversity are permitted and ordered by God, because since the Fall holiness is the result not of innocence, but of victory. SERMON
XLI.

ii. And now, brethren, let us consider some of the ways of escape which God opens to us, that we bear and conquer temptation. Ways of
escape.

a. To two of these allusion is made in to-day's epistle. The privileges of admission into God's covenant, and the continual sustenance of our spiritual life by spiritual food are enjoyed by us with a far deeper reality than by God's ancient people, because they are now sealed and assured to us by the death of Jesus Christ. Therefore one way of escape is to hold our baptism in lively remembrance, to remember at once our pledges, and Christ's promises, and therefore to fight against every evil inclination, in the sure confidence that we have a Captain who can and will lead us to victory. And another is to value very greatly the blessed ordinance of the Lord's Supper, to regard it as a privilege, a blessing, a means of gaining spiritual strength, of feeding in heart and mind on Christ's Body and Blood, of *knowing Him*, Phil. iii. 10. *and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death.* I entreat you, brethren, not to neglect this way of escaping from temptation which Christ Himself has appointed. I fear very much that many persons do not value the Holy Communion as they ought to do, or rather wholly misconceive its nature. They regard it as a kind of extra ordinance, an addition to

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our common worship, something like attendance at a special service on a weekday, a voluntary act, which only concerns those who are trying to lead a stricter life than their neighbours, a work more or less of supererogation. They do not remember that it is in truth the central ordinance of Christian worship, the rite which gives meaning to all other rites, a way opened to them for deliverance from temptation, a privilege which is to sanctify their ordinary lives, a command which none who call themselves by Christ's Name can safely disobey.

*The help
and teach-
ing of the
Holy Spi-
rit.*

Ps. xci. 4.

b. But God has not confined His means of deliverance to any outward ordinances however holy. If indeed you wilfully neglect what He has Himself provided, you cannot expect that He will furnish other ways of escape when temptations come upon you. But still His merciful provisions for the safety of Christ's people are not limited to particular seasons. If we diligently seek His grace in His Sacraments, and the worship of His Church, *His faithfulness and truth will also be our shield and buckler* when we are alone, when Christian ordinances and Christian friends are far from us, when we must struggle against danger with no external aid. He has given us conscience to warn us, the right of seeking His strength in prayer, the Spirit of truth and holiness to enlighten our hearts. Let us then in all difficulties open our hearts to the teaching of that Spirit, for it is only by Him that we can be guided to victory. It is possible so to resist temp-

tation as to be injured rather than improved by success. Everything depends on the method of our struggle, whether we fight in God's way or our own, with the desire to grow in holiness, or merely to avoid an action outwardly wrong, because it may lower us in man's estimation, or is repulsive to our natural feelings of shame and pride. We may perform, for example, an act of unselfishness, or silence the voice of indolence, or vanity, or avarice, or passion, merely because the outward inconvenience of yielding is greater than the outward inconvenience of resisting. Or we may nourish a feeling of angry discontent at the necessity of sacrificing our own wishes; we may feel irritated against those who benefit by our enforced self-denial; after expelling one evil spirit, we may admit seven others yet more wicked. ^{Mat. xii. 45.}

In the passage now before us there is a reference to a striking instance of such unblest resistance to temptation. When twenty-three thousand Israel- ^{Num. xxv.} ites fell in one day, because the people *joined themselves to Baalpeor*, the author of that wickedness ^{3.} was the prophet Balaam. Now he had been re- ^{Psa. cvi. 28.} quired to endure temptation, he had been com- ^{Num. xxii. ff.} manded by God to bless Israel, though the king of ^{xxxii. 8, 16.} Moab desired him to curse them. He felt constrained to obey God, and to resist Balak's dazzling offers of wealth and honour. But he obeyed sullenly and only in the letter. Longing all the time for Balak's rewards, he abstained indeed from actually transgressing God's command by pronouncing a

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SERMON curse upon His people, yet he attempted in another
XLI. way to gratify the malice and share the wealth of their enemies; he suggested to the Moabites a way of seducing them into sin. And so far from being blest in enduring temptation, he was only strengthened in evil; he separated himself altogether from God, and fell fighting in the ranks of His foes. Nor will it be otherwise with us, brethren, if we turn aside from the guidance of God's Spirit, if we are contented with a mere outward obedience, a constrained and reluctant endurance of temptation.

Communion with God at all times. 4. And so, after all, the various ways of escape which God has provided, Sacraments, prayer, watchfulness, Church ordinances, all other helps, resolve themselves into one principle, and that is, obedience to the precept, *My son, give me thy heart*, or, in other words, into communion with God at all times. We must come to Him as children to a reconciled Father, and lay down at the foot of Christ's cross all our evil inclinations. And, if we do so, let us not for a moment doubt the reality of His ever watchful love. Sometimes by providential appointments, sometimes by the suggestions of His Spirit, by the various means exercised by infinite Power and infinite Goodness, He will deliver us. For this communion with God, this ready desire to do His will
Prov. xxiii. 26. is true redemption from sin. This is the *crown or garland of life*, ever putting forth fresh buds and blossoms of Christian grace and holiness; this is practical faith in a living Saviour, at once the Son

James i. 12.

of Man and the Son of God, Who having *Himself* SERMON
XLI.
Heb. ii. 18. *suffered being tempted, is able also to succour them that are tempted.* Thus we shall steadily pursue the path of safety, and pass victoriously through the threatening ranks of our spiritual enemies, on our pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan, with our principles strengthened, our hearts purified, our characters disciplined by trial, and so we shall be freed from the bondage of corruption, and enabled to follow Christ in spirit and in truth, with earnest hearts and ready wills and lives devoted to His service.

Dacca,
1861.

XLII. PRACTICAL FAITH IN THE HOLY
TRINITY.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

I COR. XII. 4—6.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all.

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No Christian doctrines merely speculative.

No error is more derogatory to the greatness of Christianity, or more injurious to its influence on the world, than the belief that it contains doctrines which are merely speculative, and have no direct and practical bearing on human life. Yet this fatal mistake is one which in the present day seems gaining a wider and wider currency. It is more and more common to hear people say that the Church and Christianity have nothing to do with men's secular duties. Earthly government is represented as wholly separated from Christ, as an institution of which He takes no cognizance. One common theory is, that when earthly rulers have tried to maintain order and such a degree of re-

spectability as is necessary for the public convenience by the aid of soldiers and policemen, and find that these are insufficient for the purpose, they hire or encourage a certain number of religious teachers to inculcate moral principles upon Sundays and other suitable occasions, and to enforce them by the sanction of the Gospel, and the fear of a future judgment. It is true that these teachers preach on other subjects in which some persons take an interest, and it is right that such should be gratified, but these other doctrines are wholly impractical, interesting matters no doubt for theological study and criticism, and the cause of abundant and often unseemly disputation, but with the discharge of our ordinary functions as men and citizens they are absolutely unconnected. For the rise and extension of this most false and dangerous estimate of Christianity it is hard to say whether the Church or the world, good men or careless men, theologians or practical workers, the clergy or the laity, are most responsible. Doubtless the one side have perverted the truth by religious dogmatism, because they have refused to be contented with Christ as their Master, Christian as their title, the Church of Christ as the one religious society to which they adhere, but have separated into a number of sects and parties, calling themselves by peculiar names, descriptive of certain notions of their own, and putting these forward harshly and offensively, as the whole Gospel which God has revealed for the sal-

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vation of sinful man. And again the other side have found that the doctrines of a spiritual principle binding all society together, a divine will controlling all human wills, a righteous Lord and King of men to whom they are all responsible for the use or abuse of every power and opportunity which they possess, place a most inconvenient curb on self-interest and self-indulgence, and may often very seriously interfere with their own wishes and present advantages. Hence they have been very glad to regard Christianity as a system of doctrine intended only for clergymen, theological students, and religious enthusiasts, and wholly separated from common life, except so far as it is a useful adjunct to civil government, by its prohibition of open immorality, and of practices injurious to the outward prosperity of the commonwealth.

But whatever be the cause to which we must attribute these mistaken views of the Christian Revelation, it is quite certain that they derive no support from the Bible. However unpractically and controversially the truths of the Gospel may have been sometimes taught by professed divines, however much they may have been neglected or despised by the mass of those who call themselves Christians, yet by the apostles and other writers of Scripture they are never preached except in the closest connection with our daily duties and nearest interests, with the improvement of our hearts and the conduct of our lives. The great truths of the

Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, which (partly perhaps from their having necessarily received names which have a technical and dogmatical sound) are regarded by some as only mysterious and hardly intelligible subjects for speculation, are always put before us in Scripture in a distinctly practical form, as revealed to us in order that through believing them we may be redeemed from sin. Of this there is a most instructive example in the text, taken in combination with the whole of to-day's epistle; and by considering it we may be enabled through God's blessing to clear away from our minds some of those misapprehensions of which I have been speaking. For this purpose it will be necessary for us to understand the epistle, and to see how the text is connected with the rest of it.

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2. One of the points most frequently noticed by the apostles as a sign of the new spirit of life and freedom which the Gospel had breathed into the world is the possession of what are called spiritual gifts, that is, "powers imparted by the Holy Ghost of such a character that every believer, male or female, old or young, free or slave, found himself instinct with a new life, varying in degree, and according to the strength of his natural character, but still sufficiently powerful to be a constant witness to him of the reality of the new faith which it had accompanied¹." These gifts sometimes rose to the

*Context of
the epistle.*

¹ Stanley, *On the Epistles to the Corinthians*, p. 219.

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- level of miraculous powers, as when diseases were healed by the prayer of faith, or when on the day of Pentecost the disciples spoke in the divers languages of the mixed multitude gathered at Jerusalem for the festival. Sometimes on the other hand they were mere natural powers quickened and intensified by a new and divine energy, as the gifts of preaching, or teaching, or governing the congregation, or ministering in charitable works. But of these gifts, whether partly natural or wholly supernatural, a share was bestowed on every Christian, not only on the duly appointed ministers of the Church, but on all who had been brought within its
- 1 Cor. i. 5. pale by baptism. The Corinthians had been *in every thing enriched by Christ, in all utterance and in all knowledge*, but by the side of these blessings serious dangers had also arisen, and men began to use their gifts, not humbly and faithfully for their brethren's good, but, as is too often the case in our own day, in a disorderly and contentious spirit, to gratify their own vanity and ambition. To the cure of this great evil St Paul devotes no less than three chapters, the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth of his first letter to the Corinthians, teaching that the
- 1 Cor. xii. gifts bestowed upon members of the Church proceeded from God's Spirit, and were to be used in
- 1 Cor. xiii. Christ's service, that brotherly love was the regulating and controlling principle, without which all were worthless, and that everything must be carried
- 1 Cor. xiv. on in an obedient spirit of harmony and order. Of

this long section of the letter the opening passage SERMON
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has been chosen for to-day's epistle.

3. Concerning the origin and purpose of the *Para-*
spiritual gifts which have been bestowed upon you, ^{*phrase.*}
brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye re- ^{*1 Cor. xii. 1.*}
member the time when ye were unconverted heathen,
led about blindly to worship dumb idols, without
any exercise of your own will and reason, just
as ye might be influenced by superstitious fears, or
priestly power, or baseless traditions. Wherefore con- ^{*3*}
trasting this state with your present condition as
the rational worshippers of the living God, you must
acknowledge that your conversion is most certainly
the work of the Spirit. For as no true servant of
God, speaking under the influence of that Spirit, can
renounce Jesus, so no man can acknowledge Him as
his Lord, as you did at your baptism, except through
the same Spirit. Hence, however diverse are the gifts
bestowed upon you, it is plain that all come from
the same source from which sprang the first and
simplest of all, the profession of allegiance to the
Lord Jesus Christ. Now then you see that there ^{*4*}
are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit is the
Giver of all. And there are varieties of ministries ^{*5*}
and works to be done in the Church, but all are
rendered to the same Lord Jesus Christ, the living
Master of all believers. And there are varieties of ^{*6*}
effects produced by the operation of these gifts, but
all are due to the blessing of the same God and
Father, who works them all out to a successful issue

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*in the hands of all those to whom they are entrusted.
7 So too the object of all these gifts is the same,
namely, the benefit of others. For to each one is
given the opportunity of manifesting the Spirit's
8 power for the general profit. To one the Spirit has
given intellectual gifts, Christian wisdom in dealing
with practical subjects, or a deep spiritual knowledge
9 of divine truths. To another the Spirit has given
some preternatural gift, the faith which can remove
10 mountains, or the ability to heal various disorders,
or to manifest other miraculous displays of His divine
power. To a third class the Spirit has given powers
for edifying the Church in public worship, whether
by speaking and prophesying, or by discriminating
between true and false prophecies, or by that mar-
vellous exhibition of supernatural influence which
consists in speaking with tongues, or lastly, by inter-
preting the words spoken by those who possess this
11 power. But all these gifts are carried into opera-
tion through the agency of this one and the same
Spirit, who divides His benefits among all, giving to
each man severally according to His own will.*

*The doc-
trine of the
Trinity
stated in
the text.*

4. Such then are some of the gifts of power, knowledge and eloquence, which were bestowed in various degrees on the Corinthian converts, and were to be used by them for the edification of the Church. And now let me shew how the general subject of these gifts is connected with the particular passage which I chose as our text, and what lessons we may learn from that connection. You can hardly

have failed to observe that in this passage our thoughts are turned to the great central doctrine of Christianity, the revelation of Three Persons in one God. The special offices of these three divine Persons are distinctly put before us. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as God abiding in the Church, and bestowing upon its members their various gifts or talents; the Lord (by which phrase in St Paul's writings our Saviour Jesus Christ is always meant) as the Master in whose service all these gifts are to be used, and the various ministries connected with them exercised, and lastly God the Father as the ultimate Source of the blessing needed for their successful use by those to whom they are imparted. And while the Holy Three are thus described in their distinctive offices, we are yet led to adore them in their Unity, since the whole language of the passage points up to the One God from whom all powers and gifts proceed, for whom they must be used, and by whom they are enabled to bring forth good fruit. Now viewing the subject in this undeniable reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, let me draw from it two practical inferences, and so conclude.

i. I have protested against the mistake of merely regarding this doctrine in the light of an inscrutable mystery. Perhaps, brethren, some of you in your secret thoughts have been perplexed by it, or even repelled by it, and have speculated on the apparent contradiction in the terms by which it is necessarily conveyed to us, when regarded in its abstract form.

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*Practical
results of
the revelation of the
Trinity.*

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Others again may never think of it at all, and may deliberately look upon it as a mere point of religious dogma, which has no connection with the spiritual benefit of practical hardworking men, desirous to do their duty in this life, and if it may be to attain God's favour in the life to come. Now I think that the present passage may help to shew that these are erroneous views. For here we have the doctrine of the Trinity stated with a purpose as distinctly practical as it is possible to imagine. The apostle is urging his converts to use their special talents not in the spirit of rivalry and vain glory, but for mutual edification. And what is the argument which he thinks most likely to impress this duty upon them? He reminds them that the Three Persons of the Godhead are all directly concerned in the bestowal, and the use, and the effects of these gifts. That Spirit whom Christ sent from His Father to rule the Church, and who is now present with us to quicken our cold and corrupt hearts to life and godliness, is the Author of all the powers, mental or spiritual,

1 Cor. iv. 7. on which we pride ourselves, for *we have nothing which we did not receive*. The Lord and Saviour, who came to seek and save the lost, is now living as our Friend and Master in heaven, to accept our humble efforts, to be served by our various ministrations, to rejoice in the enlargement of His kingdom through the use which we make of the gifts and graces bestowed on us by His Spirit. And the God

Eph. iv. 6. and Father of all, *who is above all, and through all,*

and in us all, has promised to give His blessing to every honest endeavour so to use these gifts, and will not refuse the increase to those who faithfully plant and water and work in His vineyard. Thus then we are taught in Scripture to regard this doctrine of the Trinity, not as it is necessarily set forth in the technical definitions which were forced upon the Church, when it was denied or misrepresented or explained away, but as a living and practical truth revealing to us the name of God, as the Author and Giver of all good things, as the Lord in whose service they are to be diligently used, as the loving Father, without whose blessing all our own efforts so to use them must be vain.

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ii. We have seen how the mention of these gifts in connection with the revelation of God in Three Persons, gives a practical life and force to that cardinal truth, and saves us from the error of separating it from our daily prayers and life and conduct. Let us now view the subject from the opposite side, and observe how our faith in the Trinity ought to add new activity and earnestness to our employment of the gifts and powers bestowed upon us by God. Do not for a moment imagine that to-day's epistle applies only to the apostolic age. True, God has withdrawn from us some of the gifts of that marvellous period, when the whole creation was bursting forth with a new life and energy, or has bestowed them only in an ordinary and not in a preternatural degree. But it is no less true now than it was then, that from

Sanctification of all our powers by the revelation of the Trinity.

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His inspiration "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed;" that His gifts must be used in Christ's service, and will bring forth fruit to perfection through the Father's blessing. For over us, no less than over our forefathers in the faith, was the same holy Name pronounced in baptism; we no less than they have been brought into communion with Father, Son, and Spirit; to us no less than to

2 Cor. xiii. 14. *them is given the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.*

Therefore, my brethren, let each of us be sure that he has some gifts, let each devote them to his Saviour's glory, let each pray that God will prosper his use of them. The gifts are as various now as they were of old. One Christian may have knowledge and intellectual ability, another an eloquent and persuasive tongue, one may have wealth, another leisure, another practical habits of business; one may be specially fitted to influence the young, another the old; one may operate most successfully by his unwearied vigour and strength of will upon masses of men, another by his quiet influence over a small society of friends and neighbours. It is universally acknowledged that women are especially adapted for teaching the very young, and ministeing to the sick, and soothing weary hours of wakefulness and pain, though in this country alas! such noble services are often disregarded and even despised, or postponed to the superior attractions of a vain and sinful frivolity. Let no one

undervalue his brother's or his sister's gifts, or think with self-complacency on his own, since all are bestowed by *one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to each man severally as He will.* On the other hand let no one view his own gifts with undue diffidence, or believe that he can bear no part in carrying on Christ's work, for the Father's blessing can turn *the dry rock into a standing water, and the flint-stone into a springing well.* This is the true idea of the Christian Church, not of a body useful to help the civil power in preserving order, nor of a society in which a few are set apart for religious duties, while the rest carry on their daily business with an exclusive regard to their own advantage, but one in which all do all things in a Christian spirit, and with the one object constantly before them of leavening all intercourse between man and man, all work; all lawful amusement and relaxation, with Christian principle. Be quite certain, brethren, that all can do something. Believe no less surely that all are bound to do it, since when they were baptized into the Name of the Author and Director and Finisher of all these manifold gifts, they were pledged manfully to fight under their Master's banner, and to be His faithful soldiers and servants unto the end of their lives. To fight, to be Christ's soldiers and servants, implies activity, struggle, earnest pursuit of an object. That object, for which He Himself also lived and died, for which He revealed to us the doctrine of the Trinity and all

SERMON
XLII.

Ps. cxiv. 8.

SERMON other heavenly truth, is the foundation of a king-
XLII. dom of righteousness and peace, the gradual destruction of sin and sorrow, the complete restoration of a fallen world to its Father's love and blessing.

ST THOMAS'S, CALCUTTA,
1861.

XLIII. SCRIPTURE AND THE CREEDS.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

I COR. XV. 3, 4.

I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

TO-DAY'S epistle is of special importance for two SERMON XLIII. closely-connected reasons. First it states the grounds Two-fold on which St Paul believed and taught that Jesus interest of the epistle. Christ was the Redeemer of the world. And, secondly, it gives us a scriptural type of those short summaries of our faith which we call the creeds. From this its twofold interest it deserves our closest attention; and we will therefore first examine its actual contents, and then seek to apply to our own use, under God's blessing, the instruction which may be derived from it.

2. *Brethren, says the Apostle, I would remind you of the substance of the Gospel or good news which I announced to you, that Gospel which ye ac-* Para-phrase. I COR. XV. 1.

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cepted and believed, that Gospel which is the foundation of the spiritual life within you, that Gospel
2. through which you are saved from sin now, and will be saved from eternal death hereafter, if ye hold fast the import of the good news which I announced to you, unless indeed your faith is vain, and the Gospel
3. a fable¹. For I delivered unto you first of all that
 cf. 1 Cor. xi. 23. *which I myself received from the Lord Himself by special revelation, how that Christ died to atone for our sins, according to the Scriptures, which prophesy*
 Is. liii. 5. *of One who "was wounded for our transgressions*
4 and bruised for our iniquities;" and that He was buried; and that He was raised on the third day, and still lives to die no more, according to the Scrip-
 Ps. xvi. 10. *tures, which declare that "His soul was not left in hell, neither did the Holy One see corruption;" and*
5 that He was seen by Peter, then by the Twelve.
6 After that, He was seen by above five hundred brethren at the same time, of whom the greater part still survive to bear witness to the fact, but some are
7 fallen asleep. Then He was seen by James, commonly called the Lord's brother, then by all the Apo-
8 stles together. But last of all, on the road to Damascus, He was seen by me also, as by one whose birth was abrupt and untimely, the immature and
9 deformed child, as it were, of God's family; for I

¹ I must agree with Alford (against Stanley) that this is the meaning of *believing in vain*. The explanation, if your conversion was any thing more than a transitory impulse, makes the words a mere repetition of "if ye hold fast, &c." Compare too ver. 14, and the contrast *so ye believed* in ver. 11.

am the least of the Apostles, and indeed am unworthy of the glorious title of Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. Yet by the grace of God I was rescued from that state of ignorance and perversity, and I now am what I am, and His grace which was manifested towards me was not bestowed in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than any of them; yet after all it was not I who laboured, but the grace of God working with me. But I am not now considering by whom the work of preaching the Gospel has been chiefly carried on; it matters not whether this was done by me or by other Apostles: what I have just said was the purport of our preaching, and the foundation of your faith.

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3. Now in glancing hastily at the light which this passage throws on the evidence of Christianity, we cannot but be struck (i) by the transparent sincerity, and (ii) by the weight and authority of its testimony. For (i) we have here no mere repetition of facts culled from the narrative of the four Gospels. We have indeed nothing that contradicts them, but we have much which goes beyond them, and something which states distinctly what is there the subject of a bare allusion. We read here that the Lord appeared after His Resurrection separately to Peter, a fact which is nowhere described in the Gospels, but is implied in the exclamation of the Apostles on the evening of the first Easter day, *the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.* Luke xxiv. The appearance to the five hundred brethren at 34.

The passage as an evidence to the truth of Christianity.

Its undesignated coincidences with the Gospel narrative.

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XLIII.

Matt.
xxviii. 16 ff.

once may be the same as that to the disciples in Galilee, recorded in the last chapter of St Matthew, who by using the expression *but some doubted* seems to shew that others were present besides the eleven Apostles; but more probably refers to some meeting at Jerusalem not mentioned in the Gospels, when the numbers were swelled by disciples from various parts of the Holy Land, who had not yet returned from the Passover to their several homes. So too the appearance to James is not recorded in the Gospels, but as our blessed Lord, although the Saviour of all men, never undervalued the ties of nature and special affection, we can well understand that He would earnestly desire the conversion of His own brethren, who, as we know from St John's

Joh. vii. 5. Gospel, *did not believe on Him* within a few months of his death¹. On the other hand, the appearance to the Twelve coincides with that to the ten Apostles, on the evening of the Resurrection, in speaking of which, though Judas and Thomas were absent, yet the number Twelve is used as the authorized number of the apostolical college, even when it was not full; and the appearance to all the apostles is

Luke xxiv.
36.

Acts i. 6.

the same as that mentioned in the first chapter of the Acts immediately before the Ascension. So

¹ At the Feast of Tabernacles in the third year of His Ministry. See Bishop Thomson's article on "Jesus Christ" in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. It is even probable that the Lord's brethren did not believe on Him at the Crucifixion, since His mother was consigned to St John's care rather than theirs.

that the agreement of St Paul's narrative with those in the Gospels clearly belongs to the class of undesignated coincidences. He records some facts which are not mentioned by the Evangelists; but still the general character of our Lord's appearances after the Resurrection is the same in his account as in theirs; we read of "separate and transient glimpses, rather than a continuous and abiding intercourse¹," and while there is no laboured attempt at similarity, there is absolutely no discrepancy.

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ii. And while this evidence of our Lord's Resurrection is thus perfectly truthful, there can be no doubt of its very great importance. This Epistle to the Corinthians was written between twenty and thirty years after the Ascension. We have then after an interval, which to many of us, when we look back upon our lives, must seem extremely short, an account of Christ's Resurrection on the authority of eyewitnesses who were still alive, confirmed by a vision which had appeared to the narrator himself, and in consequence of which he not only had changed the whole course of his life, and abandoned his most cherished convictions, and dearest earthly hopes, but had, *through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses*, with entire self-abandonment and absolute devotion, *laboured more abundantly than all* his fellow-workers in teaching to others what he himself had seen and

*Its weight
and au-
thority.*

² Cor. vi.
4-8.
cf. xi.
22-28.

¹ Stanley, *On the Corinthians*, p. 593.

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heard, and yet refused to claim the slightest credit or distinction for all that he had done and suffered. Most instructive, most striking as an illustration of the power of Christian faith, is the contrast brought before us in to-day's services, between the words of the converted Pharisee in the epistle, *yet not I but the grace of God which was with me*, and of the unconverted Pharisee in the gospel, *God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are*. We cannot doubt the perfect truthfulness of one so pure, so humble, so self-denying, so devoted, as the great Apostle, and therefore cannot doubt the reality of events which had occurred within his own knowledge, and the knowledge of many among his friends and contemporaries about twenty years before he was writing.

Luke xviii.
11.
(See Alford in
loc.)

*Its connection with
the Creeds.*

3. And this naturally brings me to the subject to which I desire chiefly to devote this Sermon, the light which our text throws (i) on the origin, and (ii) on the practical uses of the creeds which we recite in our Church Service. I speak now only of the two with which we are most familiar, the Apostles' and the Nicene Creed; for the third, that called the Athanasian, in its form, its date, and its history, differs very greatly from these: and the consideration of the various questions connected with it would require a far longer time than remains to us this morning. Of these two formularies then it may be said generally that the Apostles' Creed was that which prevailed from a very early period in the western portion of the Catholic Church,

the Nicene Creed that used in the Eastern. It is hard to say which is the older, for though we know the dates at which the Nicene Creed was published, both in its shorter form and in that which is now in use, yet there was an older Creed¹ closely resembling it, and on which it is distinctly modelled, which recedes into the same antiquity as that which veils the origin of the Apostles' Creed. Now there are some Christians who entirely depreciate Creeds, and who seem almost to deny their scriptural character. It is not uncommonly said and thought that in Scripture we find the whole of Christianity contained in such words as these, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*, or centred in the attachment to a living or recently-departed Friend and Lord; while in the Creeds we have mere abstract notions of Christian truth, doctrinal inferences of which the germ indeed is contained in the Bible, but which are not in themselves biblical. Thus men cease to have religious or devotional associations with the Creeds, they regard them not only as purely human compositions (which, strictly speaking, of course they are), but as collections of dry theological statements, fit rather for a dogmatic age than for one of independent enquiry, when Scripture is freely examined under the light of modern criticism. And in the same way it is also argued that, even if it may be worth while to retain them among

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Acts xvi.
31.

¹ The Creed of Cæsarea. See Stanley, *Lectures on the Eastern Church*, p. 134. Also Neander, *History of the Church*, iv. 35.

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XLIII. the archives of the Church, as historical monuments, their use in public worship, which ought to be wholly devotional in its character, cannot be justified.

*Origin of
the creeds.*

i. Now in opposition to all views derogatory to these ancient expressions of the faith which nerved the early Christians alike against the terrors of persecution and the snares of worldly prosperity, we plainly learn from to-day's epistle that when St Paul proceeded on his missionary journeys from one place to another, he first of all delivered to enquirers a short compendium of the most important facts of our Lord's history, almost in the words of the Apostles' Creed, and with the addition of a declaration, in the actual words of the Nicene Creed, that these facts had all occurred *according to the Scriptures*, that is, of course, the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is true that both these Creeds are longer than the very brief summary of Gospel truth here given by St Paul, and that in the Nicene Creed especially there is much more of what may be called abstract doctrine than can be directly inferred from the simple historical facts here enumerated. Yet every one of those doctrinal statements is almost verbally identical with some passage of Scripture. I know not how we could more conveniently condense into a short formula the declaration of St John's Gospel that *the Word was in the beginning with God, and was God*; and of the Epistle to the Hebrews that the Son was *the brightness of His*

Joh. i. 1.

Heb. i. 3.

Father's glory, and the express image of His Person; and of the Epistle to the Colossians, that *He was the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, by whom all things were created*, than by calling Christ "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, by whom all things were made." Nor could we more tersely compress the whole teaching of this very chapter from which our text is taken, than into an assertion of faith in the resurrection of the body. The parable of the prodigal son, the substance of the Epistle to the Romans, nay, the chief part of the whole Gospel or glad tidings of God, are contained in the phrase, the forgiveness of sins. The statement that the Holy Ghost "proceedeth from the Father and the Son," though unhappily the subject of an angry controversy, arising, I believe, rather from historical and national circumstances than from any real difference of doctrine¹, is surely only an expression of belief in our Lord's promise that *He would send to us the Comforter from the Father*, in St Peter's assurance that *Christ having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, had shed forth* His mighty influence on the day of Pentecost, and in the many passages which assert the identity

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XLIII.
Col. i. 15,
16.

Joh. xv. 26.
(cf. xiv.
26; xvi.
15.)
Acts ii. 33.

¹ "The Western insertion of the words 'from the Son,' *filioque*, arose in the Spanish Church, from the logical development of the Athanasian doctrine against the Arian Visigoths. The Greek refusal to admit these words arose from a repugnance to any change in the decrees of the early councils." Stanley, *Eastern Church*, p. 53.

SERMON of the Spirit of Christ with the Spirit of God.
 XLIII. Even the epithet, once also hotly disputed, by which
 Rom. viii. Christ is said to be "of one substance with the
 9. Father," has its obvious parallels in the command
 Gal. iv. 6. that *all men should honour the Son as they honour*
 Phil. i. 19. *the Father*, in our Lord's own assertions that *He*
 1 Pet. i. 11. *and the Father are One*, that *He is in the Father*
 Joh. v. 23. *and the Father in Him*, that *before the world was*
 x. 30, 38. *He shared His Father's glory*, that *he who hath seen*
 xvii. 5. xiv. *Him has seen the Father*; in the teaching of St Paul
 9. that Christ was *in the form of God, and equal with*
 Phil. ii. 6. *God*; and in the visions of the Apocalypse, where
 Rev. i. 11. the same obedience, the same reverence, the same
 v. 12, 13. ascriptions of blessing and power and glory and
 xii. 10. infinity and eternity are rendered to the *Lamb that*
 xix. 13, 16. *was slain*, as to the Father *who sitteth upon the*
 xxi. 23. *throne*.
 xxii. 13.

We trace therefore directly to Scripture itself the origin of both the form and the language of our creeds. As to the first, we see that a short creed was the foundation of apostolical preaching to the unconverted Jews and heathens, and as to the second, it is not enough to say that the germ of our creeds exists in Scripture; we would rather maintain that in some cases the very words, in all cases the actual doctrines, of the creeds are found in Scripture, though the latter have been embodied into a condensed form readily committed to memory. So also we cannot admit that the apostles merely taught their converts to love Jesus Christ as their Friend

and Lord. Doubtless they did teach this as the living heart and centre of all the new belief; and no one who rightly apprehends the nature of faith in Christ, will allow his feelings of reverence, devotion, and earnest adoration of his Saviour as a living Friend, to be congealed into an intellectual assent to certain abstract doctrines about Him. But still the apostles have not merely taught us to love Christ, they have also given us a foundation for our love, in revealing to us under the guidance of God's Spirit those great truths of His nature, and those actual facts of His past work on earth, and present work in heaven, which are summed up in the creeds; they tell us to put our whole trust in Him because he has brought heaven and earth together, and because He is the Son of Man and the Son of God.

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ii. And if we thus find in Scripture the origin of the Creeds, from Scripture also we may learn their use. That use is threefold, for instruction, for doctrine, and for practice.

*Uses of the
Creeds.*

a. We have seen that the creeds are short summaries of fundamental truths, easily taught, easily remembered, fitly compared in old times to the symbol or watchword¹ of the Christian army, communicated to every one who is ready to take part as Christ's soldier in that warfare against sin which the Church is ever waging under the Captain of

Intellectual.

Heb. ii. 10.

¹ σύμβολον στρατιωτικόν, *tessera militaris*.

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*our salvation*¹. But there are certain special peculiarities falling under this head, which are remarkably illustrated by our text. The first is the prominence assigned in the creeds to Christ's death and resurrection. His miraculous conception and birth are doubtless stated as essential articles of faith, but we are taught to dwell with more especial minuteness on the circumstances attending His death, we even repeat the name of the Roman governor under whom it occurred, we say not only that He died, but that He "was crucified, dead, and buried," and that "he descended into hell," and with similar exactness we say that "on the third day He rose again from the dead." Just so the apostle tells us that *first of all* he preached to the Corinthians the death, and burial, and resurrection of Christ. And if we turn back to the Gospels themselves, we cannot help being struck with the careful detail of all circumstances connected with the last week of our Lord's earthly life, with the period between His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and His resurrection, when compared with the cursory notices of His birth and infancy. Surely this teaches us that the death and resurrection of Christ are the points in His history with which we are specially concerned, the great facts involving the pardon of our sins, our reconciliation to the Father, our hope

¹ Compare our Baptismal Service: the recitation of the creed before baptism, and the words spoken by the minister when he signs the baptized person with the cross.

of immortality, and our spiritual help in all troubles. Doubtless His birth, His infancy, His youth, all lead on to these: but yet they are chiefly important as laying the foundation for them: our main interests are bound up, not with the infant Christ in his mother's arms (according to the grievous error, which alas! has become prevalent over a great part of Christendom), but with Christ crucified and Christ risen. And a second peculiarity is the historical character of the creeds. This is the point of union between the two reasons for which I asked your special attention to the epistle of to-day: here its "two-fold interest" becomes one. Our faith does not rest on the speculations, dogmas, or dreams of philosophers; but on stubborn facts which actually occurred at a definite and well ascertained period of the world's annals. *We have not followed cunningly devised fables*, but have been taught by those who were *eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty*. Christianity does not rest merely on moral and spiritual evidences (though these are truly "adamantine"), but on historical evidence also: the historical supporting the moral, and the moral the historical. And this leads me to remark on one more peculiarity both of our creeds and of our text, the important declaration that all these events occurred *according to the Scriptures*. For these words extend the historical evidence of our faith backwards from the birth of

² Pet. i. 16.

¹ So called by Professor Goldwin Smith, *Rational Religion, &c.*, p. 110.

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Christ to the call of Abraham, and even to the fall of Adam. They link together the Old and the New Testaments, and in these days, when some seem to deny that the Jewish prophets spoke of the Messiah, they remind us that at least in St Paul's judgement, all that our Lord did and suffered was in fulfilment of Scripture. And thus they further reveal to us the fact that this same belief rests also on the authority of One greater than St Paul,

Luke xxiv.
27. even of Him, who *beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

Devotional. b. But if the creeds are thus intended to be used intellectually, they must also be used devotionally. In their terse and metrical form they seem to be less statements of abstract doctrine than hymns of praise and adoration, and triumphant confessions of faith. Of this combination we find other examples in Scripture besides the text. When the apostles were forbidden by the chief priests and

Act: iv. 18,
24. elders *to speak or teach any more in the name of Jesus*, they returned to the other members of the Church, and all *with one accord lifted up their voices to God* in a strain which might serve either as a model for a creed or of a psalm of thanksgiving, *Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the*

Ps. ii. 1.

mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were

gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ: for of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. Nor is it possible to mistake the same union of these two elements in the description of the *mystery of godliness*, in the first Epistle to Timothy, apparently quoted by St Paul from some formulary current in the Church: *manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* And thus, brethren, whether we simply repeat the creeds, or whether, as our Prayer-book permits, we sing them as hymns of jubilee, it is quite certain that we should never use them except in a devout spirit of adoring thankfulness for the infinite mercies which they commemorate.

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Tim. iii.
16.

c. And from this it follows at once that we must also use them for our spiritual and practical improvement. We should think of all their truths with the same grateful and personal appropriation of their blessings which seems to sound forth from the triumphant declaration that Jesus Christ "for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven." For every clause recites some truth intended to make us better and holier, each is connected with its own practical lesson. Christ "was made man," therefore He *knows what is in man*, and can help our infirmities. He was crucified, and *our old man is*

*Spiritual
and prac-
tical.*

Joh. ii. 25.

Rom. vi. 6.

SERMON XLIII. *crucified with Him.* He was buried, and we are
 Rom. vi. 3. *buried with him in baptism.* He rose again, and we
 Col. ii. 12. must rise with Him, and *seek the things that are*
above. He ascended into heaven, and we must in
 Col. iii. 1. heart and mind "thither ascend, and with Him con-
 Phil. iii. 20. tinually dwell." He sends us His Holy Spirit, and
 (Collect for Ascension we must seek the help of that Spirit, and open our
 Day.) hearts to His teaching, that so having received the
 forgiveness of sins, and being joined with His holy
 Church in the true Communion of Saints, we may
 2 Tim. i. look forward with faith and hope to the Resurrection
 12. of the dead, *knowing in whom we have believed,* and
 persuaded that *He is able to keep that which we have*
committed to Him against that day.

DARJEELING,

1862.

XLIV. THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

2 COR. III. 6.

The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

WE are familiar with the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit, nor is it one hard to be understood. We find it for instance in a passage selected for the epistle two Sundays hence, and which almost explains itself. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* But in to-day's epistle the contrast is not between the Spirit and the flesh, but between the Spirit and the letter. Neither indeed is this distinction strange to us. We often compare the formal half-hearted obedience which is content to observe the letter of a precept, with the loyal readiness which expands, adapts, nay perhaps even varies the letter, in order the more faithfully and punctually to carry out the spirit. Yet probably these expressions were

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XLIV.

*The Spirit
contrasted
with the
flesh, and
with the
letter.*

Gal. v. 17.

SERMON XLIV. founded on the very verse which I have taken as our text. To appreciate then fully the entire force of the distinction, we must consider the context of this passage, in which it occurs for the first time in the English language¹.

Context of the epistle.

2. It is well known that St Paul's work at Corinth was marred by certain false teachers, who denounced his doctrines of Christian freedom; questioned his authority; prided themselves on their respect for the Mosaic law, and on their purely Jewish origin; claimed a peculiar connection with St Peter, and even with our Lord Himself; and boasted everywhere of their apostolical rights and privileges, and of certain letters of commendation, or testimonials, as we might call them, from some persons high in general estimation, which they carried about with them for their own glorification, and in order to secure a party following in any Church which they might visit. The passage chosen for to-day's epistle is part of a fervid remonstrance in which St Paul expresses to his Corinthian disciples his indignation at the calumnies and machinations of these rival teachers, and his sorrow that they should find listeners even among those whom he had himself converted to the faith of Christ. He contrasts his motives with theirs, his work with theirs, his treatment of his disciples with theirs, the substance of his teaching with theirs. From their self-laudations and

1 Cor. ix.
1—6.
2 Cor. xi.
5, 22.

1 Cor. i. 12.
2 Cor. x. 7.
xi. 13, 23.
iii. 1. v. 12.

2 Cor. ii.
16—iv. 6.

Cf. 1 Cor.
iv. 15.

2 Cor. ii.
17. Cf. xi.
19 ff. iv.
2 ff.

¹ For the epistle to the Romans, in which it also occurs, was written after this to the Corinthians.

commendatory epistles he appeals to the existence of the Corinthian church as the best testimonial to his own apostolical labours. With the transparent openness and sincerity of all his dealings, he compares the selfishness with which they perverted the very Gospel itself to their own advantage. He speaks of iii. 2, 3. the greatness of his mission as a preacher of that Gospel, and of his inadequacy to fulfil it. *Who*, he ii. 16. exclaims, *is sufficient for these things?* Surely no one can be sufficient in his own strength, but yet he feels that he has been made sufficient by God's blessing on his simplicity and singleness of purpose, and by his firm conviction of the truth and divine origin of his teaching. For he preaches the new covenant, the dispensation of the Spirit, while his adversaries seek to drag Christians back to the letter and bondage of the law. And with these thoughts the epistle begins.

3. *Now such confidence*, he says, *as this of which* Paraphrase. iii. 4. *I have spoken have we, through the power imparted to us by Christ, in reference to the account of our work hereafter to be rendered to God. I do not mean that* 5. *we are able to form any sound judgement by our own power and sufficiency, but our sufficiency has God as* 6. *its source, the same God who made us sufficient ministers of the new covenant, which is a covenant, not of letter, but of spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But I am thus reminded of another con-* 7. *sideration which shews the greatness of that spiritual covenant which I preach. For if the covenant which*

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ministers death in the letter, the code of literal and formal precept, merely engraven on two tables of stone, came into existence in glory, so that, as we read in the book of Exodus, the children of Israel were not

Ex. xxxiv.
29—35.

able to fix their eyes steadfastly on the face of Moses, when he came down from the mountain, on account of the glory of his face, which was merely to last for a

8. *short time, and then to vanish, surely the covenant in*

Cf. iii. 3.

which the Spirit ministers life, and engraves His precepts on the heart, will in a far higher sense be esta-

9. *blished and accomplished in glory? For if that covenant which ministers condemnation be glory, much more must that which ministers righteousness abound in glory.*

*Further
explanation
of the
text.*

4. We must penetrate a little more deeply into the contrast between the letter and the spirit before we can apply to ourselves the abundant lessons which this passage suggests. We read that *the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life*: and therefore we have to examine the meaning of the letter, and its connection with death; and the meaning of the Spirit, and its connection with life.

*Meaning of
"the letter."*

a. The word here translated *letter* is used by St Paul to express a mere outward ordinance in contrast with its inward meaning and living power. Thus the obedience of the heart is called a service *in the newness of the Spirit*, and opposed to a formal obedience *in the oldness of the letter*. Circumcision *in the letter* is the mere external ceremony, circumcision *in the spirit* is the purification of the heart

Rom. vii.
6.

Rom. ii.
29 (Collect
for the Cir-
cumci-
sion).

“from all ungodliness and worldly lusts.” In this place it is especially used for the Mosaic law, but includes any religious system which, like the Law, consists of a code of literal precepts, to be literally obeyed.

b. Such a system the apostle calls a ministration of death: *the letter killeth*. First and most obviously, it killeth by pronouncing its stern sentence of condemnation on every violation of its precepts. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The man which doeth these things shall live in them. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.* But there is a yet deeper connection between the letter and death. St Paul says elsewhere, *By the Law is the knowledge of sin.* And yet more forcibly, *The strength of sin is the Law.* And again with greater fulness of explanation: *I was alive without the Law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.* For the Law, requiring an implicit obedience to all its enactments, and not supplying us with the means of rendering that obedience, only brings home to man's heart the consciousness of sin, without alleviating or averting it. And thus, by awakening the conscience without strengthening the will, it is really the source of spiritual death; our sins become wilful transgressions, instead of mere “negligences and ignorances.” Hence too, partly from despair at the evil which is within us and

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XLIV.

Its connection with death.

Ezek. xviii.

Lev. xviii.

Rom. x. 5.

Deut. xxvii. 26.

Gal. iii. 10, 12.

Rom. iii. 20.

1 Cor. xv. 56.

Rom. vii. 9, 10.

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XLIV.

Prov. ix.
17.

Luke xviii.
10 ff.

Meaning
of "the
Spirit."

Connection
with life.
1 Cor. xv.
45.

around us, partly from a perverse principle in our fallen nature, (acknowledged even by many heathen moralists¹;) we conceive a desire to do what is forbidden; for the wise man exprest in homely language a deep and far extending truth, when he said that *stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant*. Nor could a formal literal obedience, even were it possible, avail to renew and purify the heart: it would to the last arise from fear and not from love, it could not change the mainsprings of our conduct. The endeavour to obey on such principles would produce the character of the haughty Pharisee, thanking God for his virtues, not of the conscience-stricken Publican, seeking pardon for his sins.

c. But the new covenant is the *ministration of the Spirit*, that is, it is a covenant ministered and pervaded by the Spirit, resting not on literal and enforced obedience, but on principle. By the Spirit is meant the Holy Spirit of God, acting in and through Christ, whose secret inspiration and inward guidance are a part of the Gospel or good news which the Apostle preached, and his rivals overlooked or obscured.

d. And this *Spirit giveth life*, or as we read elsewhere, *the last Adam, Christ, is a quickening Spirit*. The Mediator of the new covenant rouses us from death by pouring into our sluggish souls fresh

¹ As by Seneca, *de Clem.* I. 23, by Cato, in Livy, xxxiv. 4, and by Ovid, *Amor.* II. 19. 3; III. 4. 17. See Wetstein and Alford on Rom. vii. 8.

vigour and animation, according to the nature of all spirit, which is essentially a life-giving principle. For while the letter, the mere writing of the Law, could only pronounce sentence of death on the disobedient, Christ's Spirit draws us to God by affection, by gratitude, by the best feelings of which we are capable, *with cords of a man, with bands of love.* He gives us, not merely life beyond the grave, but eternal life in its widest sense, *the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent;* the life which makes us *free from the law of sin and death,* and delivers us for ever from *the bondage of corruption.* SERMON XLIV.
Hos. xi. 4.
Joh. xvii.
Rom. viii.
3, 21.

5. This then is the contrast which the apostle brings before us, a contrast expanding to the widest extent, and capable of the most profuse illustration. More especially it has a three-fold aspect. It is the contrast (i) between reality and appearance; (ii) between freedom and bondage; (iii) between the holiness of the saint and the formality of the Pharisee, or the selfish code of the moralist of this world. Let us now consider these three shades of meaning.

i. We may find abundant instances from common life, in which outward distinctions do not correspond with inward, and which on an inferior scale illustrate the difference between the letter and the Spirit. He is not always a man of education or a gentleman who is so outwardly, unless his education has elevated his taste, strengthened his judgement, and raised him above folly and frivolity; and unless Appear-
ance and
reality.

SERMON
XLIV.

his gentle manners are the index of a gentle spirit. Appearance, birth, station, refinement, are all alike deceptive: the peasant, the working man, the private soldier, may possess that true education and true nobility of heart which are often wanting to those whom society courts and honours. So too we can all echo the dying lamentation of the despairing enthusiast¹, "O liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name;" for history shews that democracy is sometimes the most remorseless tyranny, and in our own experience we may have known persons professing to be liberal and enlightened, yet intolerant of the slightest deviation from their own opinions. Nor has it been otherwise with religion. The ministers of the Gospel of peace have often been cruel persecutors, often fomenters of war or sedition, and men who speak most loudly of the desperate wickedness of the heart, and utter corruption of human nature, are sometimes puffed up with self-complacency, and incapable of bearing the slightest remonstrance or rebuke. And we find, as might be expected, frequent applications of this contrast, in the writings of the great apostle, who had faithfully caught the spirit of His Master, by teaching that God always regards, not the outward seeming, but the inward reality. *He is not a Jew*, he says, of those who trusted in their privileges as the nation of God's election, *who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he*

Rom. ii.
29.

¹ Madame Roland.

is a Jew who is one inwardly. The Gentile might be in truth a Jew if he *shewed the work of the law written in his heart*, and the Jew a heathen if he had not "the true circumcision of the Spirit." And so, doubtless, St Paul would say of us; he is not a Christian who is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Christian who is one inwardly, and true baptism is "to follow the example of our Saviour Christ and be made like unto Him¹." Nay, he would go further, and as he said to the Jews *Circumcision verily profiteth*, Rom. ii. 25. *if thou keep the Law, but if thou be a breaker of the Law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision*, so he would warn us that baptism is the source of abundant blessings if we hold fast by its meaning, but only increases the condemnation of those who forget its responsibilities.

ii. The distinction between the letter and the spirit also expresses the distinction between a religion resting on the conviction of truths alike accessible to all, and one of reserve and mystery, dependent, not on a reasonable faith, but on authority. This difference is brought out strongly in the verses which follow to-day's epistle, and continue its main subject, and in which there is a further allegorical treatment of the manner in which Moses brought down the Law from Sinai. The veil which concealed the brightness reflected from the divine presence on his face, is a figure of the darkness which still clouded

SERMON
XLIV.
Rom. ii. 15.

*Bondage
and free-
dom.*

² Cor. iii.
13-15.

¹ Baptismal Service

SERMON
XLIV.

the hearts of those who refused to accept the New Testament as the interpretation of the Old. The Law, even as Moses gave it, was not a full revelation of God's purposes, for the greatest truths were still veiled by types and figures. But as explained and perverted by the rabbinical schools, it had been degraded more and more into a religion resting on the peculiar privileges and superior enlightenment of peculiar races of men, more and more assimilated to Pagan superstition and exclusiveness, to the castes and priesthoods of India and Egypt. The insolent exclamation of the Pharisees, *this people which knoweth not the Law are cursed*, is far more akin to the contempt with which a Brahman regards a Sudra, than to the spirit of Moses, who was *very meek above all the men that are on the earth*, and who proclaimed to all the Israelites that they should *be unto God a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*; while it is absolutely alien from the teaching of the *Prophet like unto Moses* who recognizes none as worshippers of the Father, except those who *worship Him in Spirit and in truth*. In opposition to all systems by which either Jews or Gentiles enslaved the human mind and exalted the few at the expense of the many, St Paul declared that Jesus Christ was the Founder of a universal redemption, in which there were no mysteries committed to the exclusive keeping of a highly favoured caste; of a Catholic Church, in which none could claim to approach God except through avenues open alike to all; and of a spiritual

Joh. vii.
49.

Num. xii.
3.

Ex. xix. 6.

Acts iii.
22.

Deut. xviii.

15.

Joh. iv. 23.

religion, which can only be received by the intelligent conviction of the mind and thankful assurance of the heart, that those blessings of pardon and holiness, to which conscience testifies as our deepest needs, can be found in the Gospel alone, for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. The *ministration of the Spirit* is free, expressive, comprehensive, breathing new life into every soul which is open to influences, even as *the wind bloweth where it listeth*, and enabling all alike, with no difference of class or profession, to cry *Abba, Father*. Those whom Christ has commissioned to minister to their brethren in heavenly things can claim no *dominion over their faith*, but as St Paul and St Peter were wont to describe themselves, are *helpers of their joy*, fellow-workers, who should humbly strive to be *ensamples to the flock*: for *by faith*, that is, by each man's own faith, his own real conviction that the Gospel is true, his own spiritual perception of its infinite blessings, his own personal acceptance of Christ as his Saviour, *ye stand*.

iii. And this leads to the remaining contrast between the letter and the Spirit, that the one expresses a conventional, or, at best, an imperfect morality, the other an earnest pursuit of inward holiness, springing from the genuine conversion of the heart to God, and shewing itself in purity of life and active goodness. For a formal obedience to our own puny code of morals, we must substitute the love of our Saviour, and the morality which His

SERMON
XLIV.

² Cor. iii.

¹⁷.

Joh. iii. 8.

Rom. viii.

¹⁵. Gal. iv. 6.

² Cor. i. 24.

¹ Pet. v. 3.

Formal obedience and Christian holiness.

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XLIV.

² Cor. iii.
18.

life displayed. From the limited precepts of worldly honour, or the study of mere outward decorum, or the contented acceptance of the ordinary standard of duty, we must turn to the contemplation and imitation of Christ. In the verses which follow to-day's epistle, Christians are said to *behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord*, and to be *changed into the same image from glory to glory*. The phrase, *beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord*, rather means *reflecting*¹ it as from a bright metallic mirror, whether of brass or silver, such as the ancients used before the invention of looking-glasses. Christians then are represented as receiving into their lives the reflected glory of Christ's spiritual presence, just as these mirrors fling back the rays of the sun, and as Moses bore on his countenance visible proofs of intercourse with God. Here then is another blessing promised to those who enter into the dispensation of the Spirit rather than of the letter. The Spirit brings us face to face with Christ: and thus we catch the reflection of His perfect holiness. And that brightness will never fade away, as the light did from the face

¹ This interpretation, which is given by Chrysostom and Luther, is denied by Alford, but is ably defended by Stanley, in an elaborate note, which seems to me quite convincing. If we take the expression to mean "beholding not face to face but in a mirror," we contradict the general spirit of the passage, for this would imply an imperfect beholding, as in 1 Cor. xiii. 12, whereas the apostle is here speaking "not of a distant, but of an intimate relation with God." This argument alone appears conclusive, but the whole note is well worth reading.

of Moses, if we stedfastly use our privilege of gazing *with open face* on our Lord. On the contrary, it will become clearer and clearer, less and less dimmed by the cloudy surface of the mirror from which it is reflected, for the mirror itself, that is, the heart and life of the true Christian, will be brightened by that perfect Light. Thus shall we be continually undergoing a transformation into the image of that which we reflect, till at last, as we have become more and more like Christ here by looking upon Him with the eye of faith, we shall be ready, actually and literally, *to bear the image of the Heavenly*, when we see Him *as He is* hereafter.

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XLIV.

1 Cor. xv.
49.
1 Joh. iii.

6. Thus then, brethren, in all these three applications of the text, we find it true that *the letter killeth, and the Spirit giveth life*, no less than in the general sense in which I first explained the words. *The letter killeth* by persuading us to substitute transient appearance for permanent reality; bondage for freedom; formal obedience for a living resemblance to Christ. And the Spirit giveth life, by teaching us to be genuine and true; to rely on our own convictions, not on the authority of others; to seek for the holiness of the heart, not the precision of outward observances. But I would still call your attention to one other lesson contained in to-day's epistle, which will prevent any hasty or fallacious inferences from the language which has been used. I have spoken strongly, but not too strongly, of the spiritual character of Christianity, of the absolute nothingness of

2.
Caution against forgetting that the letter has a glory of its own.

SERMON XLIV. all outward things in God's sight, unless they correspond to inward verities. I have said that truth, reality, freedom, growth, the conviction of the mind, the service of the heart and life, are the essentials of the Gospel, even as St Paul has told us three

Gal. vi. 15. times over that *circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing*, but that *a new creature, faith working by love, and the keeping the commandments of God* are everything. But yet we must not forget that outward things have also a glory of their own.

Gal. v. 6.
1 Cor. vii. 19. The Law, though it sank at last into the bondage of

Acts xv. 10. the letter, and became a yoke which none could bear, was inaugurated by a manifestation of God so glorious that the face of Moses reflected it when he came down to deliver his message to the people. And when the apostle argues that *the ministration of righteousness exceeds in glory*, he allows that the *ministration of condemnation* is glory also. Therefore we must not fall into the fatal error of despising outward helps, and means of grace, or the principle of obedience, or readiness to listen to those who are wiser and better than ourselves, or the deepest reverence for the least of God's commandments. But let us use all these, according to God's design, as aids to faith and holiness, most needful for us in our weak and fallen state, not as ends to be valued in themselves. The glory of the Law passed away

Gal. iii. 24. when men refused to see that it was *a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ*. So too our Christian sacraments, forms of worship, all our outward helps have

been almost degraded into idolatrous ceremonies by those who fancied that they possess some virtue, even in the absence of faith and obedience, and of the devout heart and ready will earnestly desiring to co-operate with the Spirit of God. But yet they are in truth His sacred institutions, channels through which His grace is conveyed to us, and designed in mercy for our lasting good. Circumcision, which, as St Paul tells us, is nothing, was yet for fifteen centuries the barrier which separated God's people from heathenism, the ever present witness to a pure and lofty morality. Uncircumcision, which he also calls nothing, is yet associated with our highest privileges, a testimony to the spiritual equality and freedom of all believers in Christ, a sign that *we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* Gal. iii. 29. But to the Jews who would not feel that duties were connected with the barrier of the one, to Christians who associate no blessings and responsibilities with the freedom of the other, it is most true that both alike are nothing, devoid of all meaning and all power. Therefore let us humbly accept and thankfully use all the means of approaching God which Christ our Lord has instituted, but let us regard them as belonging to the ministration of the Spirit, not of the letter, and therefore let us quicken them by earnest prayer and heartfelt gratitude, and above all by a living faith in Jesus Christ, through whose grace alone they can be profitable to our souls.

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XLIV.

XLV. THE USES OF THE LAW.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

GAL. III. 19.

Wherefore then serveth the Law? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

SERMON
XLV.
*Difficulties
in the epistle.*

TO-DAY'S epistle, though its general scope is plain, contains very great obscurities of detail. It cannot therefore be understood except by those who are willing to give their closest attention to it, and it is possible that the necessary explanations may seem tedious. Yet this should not be so. For if God had not desired us to do our utmost to understand the passage, He would not have suffered his apostle to write it in one of the books which contain the revelation of His will. There are no esoteric doctrines in Christianity, but *whatsoever things are written are written for our learning*, and for the benefit of the whole Church. Doubtless in preaching to the poor and ignorant, we do well to pass lightly over certain parts of Scripture, although we would gladly explain it all to them if we could, because from their limited

knowledge and circle of thoughts, it is hard to bring home to their comprehension all the elaborate reasonings of St Paul, and all the historical facts and circumstances of ages which were in some respects quite different from our own. But an educated congregation is bound to listen to the whole of God's word, to attend to it, and to seek to understand it. If indeed persons fritter away in frivolity this precious gift of intellect and education ; if they never feed their minds on anything more invigorating than novels, and those perhaps of the most trifling and worthless description ; or if their thoughts and conversation are engrossed by the petty concerns and peculiarities and delinquencies of their neighbours ; or again if they are wholly absorbed in worldly matters, in *buying and selling and getting gain*, or otherwise studying their own worldly advantages ; then in none of these cases is it likely that they will take much interest in solving the difficulties found in the writings of prophets and apostles, or indeed of any great authors, whether in sacred or profane literature. Such persons should consider whether the cause of their weariness, when such subjects are brought before them, does not lie in themselves rather than in St Paul, or even his expounders. But there are others who know by experience that the Bible, in addition to its other claims on us, is the most interesting, varied, and attractive of all books, if only we will take the trouble to sound its depths, and rise to its heights, and these will not grudge the small

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XLV.

James iv.
13.

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amount of time and attention necessary to appreciate that explanation of the uses of the Law which has been read in to-day's service. The subject will be the converse of that suggested to us by last Sunday's epistle: then we were reminded of the superiority of the Gospel to the Law, of the Spirit to the letter: to-day we shall enquire what was the intention of the Law while it lasted, and what lessons it still conveys.

*Context of
the epistle.*

Gal. i. 6.
ii. 3 ff. iii.
1 ff. cf. v.
3—12. vi.
12—16.

2. It might have been better if to-day's epistle had included one verse more than it actually contains, beginning with the fifteenth rather than the sixteenth verse of the third chapter. For with the former this section of the epistle to the Galatians commences. St Paul has been rebuking his disciples in Galatia for their folly in renouncing their claim to God's favour through faith in Christ, and attempting to substitute for this a return to the Law, and circumcision with all its attendant obligations, restrictions, and impossibilities. There were those in Galatia, as there are among ourselves, who held the mere antiquity of a religion to be a conclusive argument in its favour. So St Paul explains that this argument cannot be urged in favour of the Law, since it was in reality more modern than the Gospel, which was the direct fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham, made long before the Law was instituted; just as we might reply to a Romanist urging that his Church is more ancient than ours, that the Church of Rome is a corruption, the Church of England a

restoration of primitive and apostolical Christianity. SERMON
XLV.
The argument, that the Gospel rests on this ancient promise, and therefore cannot be superseded by the Law, is the foundation of to-day's epistle, in which St Paul gives the reason for which the Law was instituted, as a temporary provision, till the promise could be fulfilled.

3. *Brethren*, he says, (in the fifteenth verse, *Paraphrase.*
with which for the sake of clearness, we begin our Gal. iii. 15.
paraphrase) *the customs of men shew that God's free promise to Abraham cannot be annulled by the Law, which was established long after it was given. I use a comparison from common life: even a mere human covenant, once ratified, is never annulled or altered by additional conditions. Now to Abraham and to his* 16.
seed were the promises of God's free bounty repeatedly made in such words as these: "I will give unto Gen. xvii.
thee and to thy seed after thee all the land of Ca- 8. xxi. 12.
naan for an everlasting possession:" "in Isaac shall xxii. 18.
thy seed be called:" "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." God saith not "unto seeds," as if He were speaking of all the patriarch's descendants, but as of one particular progeny, "and to thy seed," which is Christ. This then is my argu- 17.
*ment, the covenant, which was previously ratified by God*¹*, cannot be abrogated by the Law, which was not constituted till four hundred and thirty years after-*
*wards*²*, and cannot therefore make void the promise.*

¹ The words *in Christ* are wanting in the best MSS.

² The number of years here given might have been mentioned

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18. *For if the kingdom of Christ, which is the fulfilment of the promise that Abraham and his seed should inherit the land for ever, rests on the Law as its foundation, it can no longer be said to depend on a free promise, independent of all conditions; whereas we are told that to Abraham God freely gave the inheritance through promise, and not as a reward for*
19. *work either done or expected. What then is the use and meaning of the Law? On account of transgressions was it added, until the Seed should come in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed, and it was enjoined by means of angels, through the*
20. *intervention of Moses as a mediator. Now Moses, like every other mediator, is not a mediator of one,*
21. *whereas God is One. Is the Law then opposed to the promises of God? No, verily! for it does not pretend to do the work of the original covenant: if a law which could have brought spiritual life to the soul had been given, then in truth by the*
22. *Law would righteousness have come. But, as no such Law was given, God speaking in Scripture shut up as it were in prison all mankind under sin, in order that the things promised by faith in Jesus Christ might be bestowed as a free gift on those who have that faith.*

Explanation of special difficulties.

4. We must now pass from this general view of

among the difficulties of the passage, but its discussion would be quite out of place in a sermon. The reader will find the subject considered by Alford and Ellicott, and by Mr R. Stuart Poole in the article *Chronology*, in Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*.

St Paul's argument to consider, as shortly as is consistent with clearness, some of its difficulties in detail.

a. The first is the distinction between seed and seeds. *He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one: and to thy seed, which is Christ.* It seems at first sight as if St Paul were here interpreting *seed* of an individual, not a plurality, and arguing from this sense; whereas neither the English word, nor its equivalents in the original languages of the Old and New Testaments, are commonly used for a single person, but rather for progeny or descendants. But the apostle only means that the promise did not apply to all the races which sprang from Abraham, to the Arabs, for instance, descended from Ishmael, or to the sons of Keturah, but was limited from the first to the line of Isaac, and fulfilled at last in Christ, the descendant of Isaac, and in His Church¹. For the words, *thy seed, which is Christ*, imply not only our Lord as a single Person, but as the Seed of a new creation, the second Adam or Founder of the redeemed family, the Head of the Body. So we plainly gather from the words at the end of this very chapter, *we are all one in Christ Jesus; and if we are Christ's then are we Abraham's seed* (where the

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*Distinction
between
seed and
seeds.*

Gen. xxv.
1—4.
12—16.

Rom. v.
15 ff.
1 Cor. xv.
45.
Eph. ii. 20
—22.
iv. 15, 16.
Col. i. 18.
&c.

¹ So Augustine. Alford objects to "Christ and His Church," and insists in a long note on the importance of saying "Christ as containing His people," "Christ including His mystical Body." He seems to be making a distinction without a difference: of course neither here nor elsewhere must we think of the Church apart from its Head.

SERMON XLV. repetition of the word should be noticed), *and heirs according to the promise.* So that St Paul's meaning is this; the promise was given to Abraham and his seed: not indeed to the various seeds or nations who should spring from his loins, but to one nation, the Israelites, the seed of Isaac, of whom was born Christ, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, and from whom has sprung the new progeny, the seed of Abraham's faith, the Church of Christ, those who are redeemed out of all the earth and made one with their Saviour.

The Law given by angels.

b. We read that *the Law was ordained by angels.* So too the first martyr Stephen brings to a climax his reproaches against the cruel fanatics who were thirsting for his blood, by telling them that *they had received the Law by the disposition of angels, and had not kept it.* And again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Law is called *the word spoken by angels*, and contrasted with *the great salvation spoken by the Lord, and confirmed unto us by them that heard Him.* Such language was common among the Jews of St Paul's time; and though often degraded by Rabbinical inventions, is the expression of a great truth. It teaches us that till Christ came, man was not brought face to face with God, that under the old covenant God was revealed not directly, but through the intervention of angels, that the

Acts vii. 53. *Only begotten Son, who is,* and was from all eternity, *in the bosom of the Father, first declared Him.* Thus various displays of God's power are referred to the

Heb. ii. 2, 3.

Joh. i. 18.

instrumentality of angels. They are the agents of the pestilences which slew the first-born of Egypt, the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness, the victims of David's sin when he numbered the people, and as we heard this morning, the hosts of Sennacherib. In all these cases God employs inferior spirits as the ministers of His purposes, and so marks the dispensation under which He thus acted, as inferior to that in which *He speaks to us directly by His Son*.

SERMON
XLV.
Ex. xii. 23.
Heb. xi.
28.
1 Cor. x.
10.
2 Sam.
xxiv. 16.
1 Chr. xxi.
16.
2 Ki. xix.
35.
Heb. i. 2.

c. And this inferiority, this employment of intermediate agency separating us from God, is further marked by the statement that the Law was given *in the hand of a mediator*, that is of Moses, and by the famous verse, more concise, obscure, and variously interpreted than any other in the New Testament, *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is One*. We cannot attempt to exhaust in a few sentences all its difficulties, or to consider the conflicting arguments for its different interpretations. The only way of approaching the true interpretation is to adhere steadily to the subject which the apostle is explaining, and to consider what light is thrown on the difference between the law and the promise by the appointment of a mediator. Now a mediator, being interposed as it were between two parties, implies variance, opposition, or at least separation. It is his business to reconcile and bring them together by mutual concessions, conditions and accommodations. If two persons cannot communicate with each other through difference of language, they need an inter-

*A mediator
is not a me-
diator of
one, but
God is One.*

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Deut.
xxviii. 1—
8.

preter; if through some quarrel or misunderstanding, they need one to reconcile them; if through discordant claims, they need an arbitrator to suggest a compromise, or arrange conditions which may harmonize their conflicting interests. And thus when man was becoming more and more alienated from God by sin, Moses brought down the Law from Sinai to save him from the anger due to his increasing wickedness, by means of an agreement that if the Israelites *would observe to do all the commandments which God had commanded them, He would bless them...in the land which He gave them, and would establish them a holy people unto Himself*¹. His blessings then were conditional, dependent not on

¹ This is Schleiermacher's explanation. I agree with Alford that though the proposition, *a mediator is not a mediator of one*, would not by itself convey any meaning but that a mediator belongs to two parties and not one, yet, combined with *God is One*, it carries to the mind of the reader the thought of God's unity as an essential element in the explanation of the verse. But when he goes on to explain the words to mean that *God is faithful*, and therefore cannot falsify His promise, he seems to wander from the context. The contrast between the two clauses leads our thoughts not to unchangeableness as implied in God's unity, but to independence. Two parties require a mediator, not because they are unfaithful, but because their claims are mutually dependent, confused, and conflicting, and must be reconciled; whereas God, who from His unity is independent, acts according to His own will only, and requires no mediator. Ellicott's interpretation: "God is One, because He is Giver and Receiver united; Giver as the Father, Receiver as the Son, *the Seed to whom the promise was made*," (adopted from the Roman Catholic expositor Windischmann) must be rejected, not on account of the context, which is more favourable to it than to Alford's, but because it would have been impossible for the Galatians to have gathered so very recondite a meaning from St Paul's brief words.

His own free grace and mercy, but on the obedience of the people. But in the promise God was One, alone and unfettered by conditions, independent of those to whom it was made, giving everything, and receiving nothing as a condition of His gifts. Therefore in accepting the promise, we no longer look to ourselves at all, but regard only the unmerited and unconditional blessings of the One God, freely accepting us as His children. Therefore we need no mediator, we are no longer separated from God, we come to Him ourselves, trusting in Him alone.

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d. Yet this explanation may seem to involve a new difficulty. For we are told elsewhere that *under the Law and under the Gospel there is One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*, and that His mediation is among our choicest and most precious privileges. But the work of the human mediator Moses was wholly different from that of the divine Mediator Christ. Moses interposed the Law between God and man, Christ has reunited the parties at variance and made them One in Himself. Because Christ and His Father are One, therefore His mediation is not inconsistent with the declaration that God is One; rather God's independence and free grace are gloriously exhibited in the employment of such a Mediator.

Mediation under the Law and under the Gospel.
1 Tim. ii. 5.

5. These then are the chief difficulties of today's epistle; and it now only remains to apply it as a whole, under God's blessing, to our own practical good. St Paul tells us that the Law could not

General purpose of the Law.

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invalidate God's promise, since it was restricted to a particular object, *given because of transgressions*; that it was temporary and provisional, *till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made*; not immediately given by God, but *ordained by angels*; and not immediately received from God, but *through a mediator*. And thus the answer to the question, *wherefore then serveth the Law?* is that *it was added because of transgressions*, the other clauses of the text expressing not its use, but its points of difference from the Gospel. And we shall find that the answer in its various applications will teach us the uses of the Law, not only of old to the Jews, but now also to ourselves.

Repression
of sin.

i. The primary sense of these words is that the Law was added to repress transgressions, that is, the various transgressions of God's will revealed to the conscience. It was designed to check those grosser indulgences of sin, which the shadowy recollection and uncertain hope of the promise made to Abraham had not strength to restrain¹. And to us, no less than to the Jews, God's emphatic declarations of anger against sin must operate as a perpetual warning. We must read the warning too, *not in the letter, but in the Spirit*, in the light of that pure and lofty

² Cor. iii.
6.

¹ That this is the primary sense of the words is maintained by Chrysostom and the majority of ancient and modern interpreters, but is denied by Alford and Ellicott, who however differ as to the actual meaning. But the interpretation here given is fully and ably vindicated by Neander, *Pflanzung und Leitung*, Vol. II. p. 101 (Ryland's translation).

morality revealed to us by Christ, and penetrating to our thoughts, our motives, and the inner springs of our actions. When God's minister, Sunday after Sunday, pronounces in our ears the prohibition of murder and adultery, our thoughts, instead of wandering off to the condemnation of some depraved criminal or wretched outcast, from whose temptations or whose ignorance we have been mercifully preserved, should recall the words of Him who said that the one Commandment is violated by an impure look, and the other by a thought of causeless anger. SERMON XLV.
Matt. v. 22, 28.

The Law has sterner and sharper warnings for us than for Israel after the flesh. *For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, Moses, the human mediator, whose intervention could never bring God and man together, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven, by whose divine mediation we are restored to the free, unfettered love of the One God. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is still a consuming fire to those who forget His promises, forsake His salvation, and violate His commandments.* Heb. xii. 25, 28, 29.

ii. But besides the office of repressing transgressions, the Law was designed to call forth and to maintain a vivid consciousness of their guilt. While it checks the outward manifestations of our fallen nature, of *the flesh* which ever *lusteth against the* Conviction of sin.
Gal. v. 17.

SEMON XLV. *Spirit*, it awakens in us at the same time a deeper desire for forgiveness and deliverance from bondage.

Gal. iii. 24. Thus it is our *schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*, suggesting to us the need of a surer justification, a firmer ground of acceptance with God, than our own weak efforts to accomplish His will. Every one of the familiar precepts, to love Him with an exclusive devotion, to flee from all idolatrous and degrading conceptions of Him, to reverence His Name and ordinances, to render to all men due honour, to injure no one in his person, his affections, his rights, his reputation, to restrain every lustful and covetous desire, may well abase us when we remember how often we have violated them in thought, word, and deed, and bring us as humble penitents to the foot of Christ's cross, there to seek pardon for the past, and strength for the time to come.

*Warnings
of the his-
tories and
prophecies
of the Old
Testament.*

iii. And if we extend the question, *Wherefore then serveth the Law?* so as to consider the uses not merely of the Decalogue and other Mosaic enactments, but of the whole dispensation in which they were included, we shall confront a question, not unfrequently asked with doubt and embarrassment, wherefore then serveth the Old Testament? what is the use of studying those histories, from which we read to-day the last portions selected for our annual round of Church services, or those prophecies, to which we pass next Sunday? For they are the records of a nation long driven from the land promised to Abraham, and of a system now superseded for

2 Ki. xix.
xxiii. (13th
Sun. after
Trin.)
Jer. v.
(14th Sun.
after Trin.)

ever. They teach us many things, but chiefly this, that God's wrath against sin is a reality, and not merely a vague way of expressing in religious language the truth that the laws of nature tend on the whole to encourage virtue and to discountenance wickedness. Rather we learn from them that God, as a living personal Agent, does hate and punish all transgressions of His moral Law, whether committed by nations or individuals. In the vengeance which overwhelmed the weak selfishness of Ahab, the ferocity of Jezebel, the insolence of Sennacherib; and in the warnings address to Judah and Israel, to Babylon and Assyria, *the Lord has made bare* as it were *His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations*; we see Him revealed as the righteous Ruler of mankind, we hear a declaration of the principles on which He guides all human affairs, whether, as in the Bible, He is actually displayed before us as working, or whether, as in ordinary history, we see only the effects of His work. We are warned that now among ourselves, in India, in England, in Europe, in America, it is as true, as ever it was, that *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*, and not only its reproach, but sooner or later its destruction.

iv. And this reminds me of another use of the Old Testament, which must never be forgotten. It does not consist wholly of moral precept, or historical narrative, or prophetic warning. It is not too much to say that a great part of the Old Testament is a

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1 Ki. xxi.
xxii. 2 Ki.
ix. xix.
(10th, 11th,
13th Sun-
days after
Trin.).

Is. lii. 10.

Prov. xiv.
34

Anticipa-
tion of
Christian-
ity.

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direct anticipation of the New. We find in it ritual observances which shadow forth the great Atonement, predictions in which the work of a suffering and glorified Messiah is accurately described. The Psalms have been fitly called the prayer book of Christians in all ages. We can no where find a truer and deeper representation of Christian penitence than in that heart-broken cry for pardon and peace, in which David, still smitten to the earth with the consciousness of guilt, confesses that *he was shapen in wickedness*, and prays God to *give him the comfort of His help again*, and (almost in the very words of St Paul) *to establish him with His free Spirit*. So that we may well praise God, in the noble words of an old writer's thanksgiving, that "He has instructed us by all that is written in the Law, by the rite of sacrifice, by the oracles of prophets, by the melody of psalms, by the wisdom of proverbs, by the experience of histories¹," as well as for His yet fuller and richer mercy, when the fulness of time was come, in sending forth His Son.

Ps. li. 5,
12.

Cf. Rom.
viii. 2.
2 Cor. iii.
17. Gal. ii.
19. v. 1.

*Need of at-
tention and
thoughtful-
ness in or-
der to use
these les-
sons.*

6. Only, brethren, and here I return for a moment to the warning with which I began, if we are to appreciate these blessings, we must think about them, we must apply to them our minds and our hearts. If attention is necessary that we may understand special difficulties and obscure texts in the Bible, much more is it needed in order that we may

¹ Bishop Andrewes.

value the Bible as a whole, and make it the guide of our lives. Beware then of frivolity, beware of the fear of this world, and of the love of this world, for these (as we learn from the first of our Lord's parables) are the three chief hindrances which prevent the seed of God's word, when sown in our hearts, from springing up and bearing fruit. The consciousness of sin, the desire of redemption, the love of Christ, cannot sink deeply into any mind which is given up to folly, or selfishness, or the fear of man's opinion. It is quite true that God's promises are free and unchangeable, and only waiting for our acceptance; but it is also true that they cannot be accepted, except by the thoughtful heart and the earnest will, and the conscience awakened to a sense of the misery of sin, and convinced that there is no deliverance from it except in Christ.

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Matt. xiii.
19 (careless
indiffer-
ence), 21
(fear of
man), 22
(worldli-
ness).

DARJEELING, 1862.

XLVI. *THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT.*

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

GAL. V. 17.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

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XLVI.
*Meaning of
the flesh
and the
Spirit.*
2 Cor. iii.
4—9.

THE difference between the Spirit and the letter was brought before us in the epistle two Sundays ago, to-day we are again invited to consider the work of the Spirit, but in another and more obvious contrast. We are told that the government of man's heart and disposition is disputed between two opposite principles, ever contending for mastery in a strife which is absolutely irreconcilable. One of these principles is *the flesh*, and the other is *the Spirit*. By the flesh we are not merely to understand our bodily lusts and passions, which is the meaning of the word in our catechism, where its snares are distinguished from those of the world and the devil, but rather it is used to express our original as opposed to our renewed and Christian character, the natural

mind which, as we are elsewhere told, *is enmity with God*. For among the works of the flesh are enumerated not merely uncleanness and drunkenness, but emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, and other evils unconnected with our fleshly appetites. And by the Spirit is meant, as before, the Holy Spirit of God, now regarded as the only lawful Ruler of the regenerate man, from whom springs the active and animating principle of the Christian life, *the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, who has made us free from the law of sin and death*. And the human soul is the seat of the struggle between these two opposite principles, between that ingrained evil which has its source in the corruption of our nature, and the Spirit of our heavenly Father, who brings us forth as conquerors over sin *into the glorious liberty of His children*. Now the great question for each man is this, What part am I myself taking in this contest, in which direction is my own will inclining, are its energies active on the side of the flesh or of the Spirit? We shall be better able to appreciate the reality of the struggle, and we shall perhaps be persuaded to bear our own part in it more manfully, if we go through the nine verses which form to-day's epistle in a hasty paraphrase, and with some occasional explanations to shew their full bearing and connection.

2. *Now I exhort you, says the apostle, walk according to the Spirit, follow His teaching in heart and life, and then you will not fulfil the passions and*

SERMON
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Rom. viii.
2.

Rom. viii.
21.

Paraphrase of
the epistle.
Gal. v. 16.

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- inclinations of the flesh, of your natural unrenewed disposition. For the passions and inclinations of the*
17. *flesh or natural man resist the promptings of God's Spirit, and on the other hand the Spirit seeks to restrain your natural wishes and dispositions. These two principles then are opposed one to the other, and prevent you from doing the things which ye may from*
18. *time to time desire. But if ye suffer yourselves to be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law: the law has no dominion over you, because it was ordained to check the influences and works of the flesh, and has no claim to govern him who has yielded himself up to the teaching of the Spirit, just as a child who really respects his father obeys him from love and not from*
19. *fear. And in order to shew this, the difference between the works of the flesh, against which the law is ordained, and the fruits of the Spirit, against which there is no law, shall be manifested by special examples. The works of the flesh are plainly such as these: first, sins of impurity, as fornication, uncleanness, wantonness; secondly, of irreligion, as idolatry*
20. *and sorcery; thirdly, of malevolence, as enmities, strife, jealousy, outbreaks of wrath, cabals, dissensions, party*
21. *spirit, envyings, murders; and fourthly, of excess, as drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you now, as I also forewarned you formerly when I was with you, that they who do such things shall*
22. *not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit which ripens on the tree planted by God's Spirit is love, joy,*
23. *peace, forbearance, benevolence, goodness, trustfulness,*

meekness, selfrestraint: and surely against these there is no condemnatory law. Now they who are really Christ's servants crucified the flesh with its lusts and inclinations when they entered upon His service, and therefore the end of this struggle in every true Christian's heart must be that he yields himself to the guidance of the Spirit, and so brings forth fruit unto holiness.

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3. And now, brethren, I trust that by dwelling on this passage of Scripture you have been helped to understand its meaning, and to see what is the nature, and what should be the result of the great struggle which it describes. This must always be our first step in reading the Bible, to understand it. And the second step is that we should apply it practically to ourselves. Let us then try to take this second step now with reference to the present passage. Indeed it deserves our closest attention and most personal application, for it concerns each of us for all eternity. So let every one here present realize to himself the all-important truth, that not in some vague abstraction which he calls human nature, not in the souls of those Galatians to whom St Paul wrote eighteen centuries ago, not in the souls of some among his own contemporaries whom he regards perhaps as dreamy enthusiasts, or as morbidly conscientious, not in the souls of his neighbours, but in his own soul, in the individual separate soul of every man, woman, and child in this congregation, a contest is going on between the unrenewed sinful

*Struggle
between the
flesh and
the Spirit.*

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heart, and the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, ever seeking to save those who without Him are lost. It is a point on which a preacher must speak individually and personally, and which each separate hearer must consider for himself. Have you never felt this struggle, my brother, do you not know it by your own experience? Surely conscience has sometimes warned you, and the memory of Christ's words or some holy influence of bygone days has come into your heart, at times when you were following unrestrained your own corrupt inclinations, and yielding to such temptations as St Paul here reckons up, to impurity, or to irreligion, or to hatred, or to revelry and excess. Surely in that hour of danger and spiritual death, the thought of something holier and purer, of love, peace, joy, gentleness, has forced itself upon you: and then a struggle has begun, and possibly you have paused awhile in the course of sin; or perhaps you have continued it, and silenced the voice within you, and persisted in obeying the flesh rather than the Spirit. Let me then entreat you to ponder well the words of the text, *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* Surely this is only too true a picture of the manner in which a man is often tost to and fro between good and evil, sometimes, according to St Paul's description of the same contest in another place, *delighting in the law of God after the inward man, but seeing another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bring-*

Rom. vii.
22.

ing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members; sometimes on the other hand eager to gratify a simple desire, yet feeling that by God's mercy another law has entered his heart, warring against the law of his members, and freeing him from captivity to the law of sin which is in his members. Sometimes, alas! only too often, *that* Rom. vii. 15. which we do we allow not, for what we would that do we not, but what we hate, that do we; and again, that which our higher nature desires to do it cannot do, for what we admire and love, that we do not. But sometimes again our higher nature is enabled by God's grace to do what our indolence is reluctant to do, or to abstain from the evil to which our passions incite us. It is as if we were two persons, not one: as if the Holy Spirit were teaching our real, our better self to desire what is right, but were mastered by an evil power which rules us against our will, using our bodily appetites, our worldly desires, and a thousand other unsanctified inclinations, as so many instruments of warfare against that divine law which our hearts approve and vainly endeavour to obey. Thus the text describes each varying impulse of the contest. We understand the phrase *ye would*, in the clause, *so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*, as bearing a middle sense, expressing the varying inclination of man's free will now to good, now to evil. Sometimes the things that we would, or may desire to do, are right and holy, suggested by the Spirit and resisted by the flesh; sometimes they

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are the unblest lusts of the natural man, checked and controlled by the Spirit. The battle is fierce and deadly, the forces seem equally matched, and the question of life and death which concerns every one of us is, What will be the issue? Now, brethren, if there is any one here who recognizes this description as corresponding to his own experience, let me further urge on him two reflections, the one full of encouragement, the other of warning.

Encouragement in the struggle.

i. Undoubtedly the condition just described is in some respects a hopeful one. A warfare and a struggle, even though disgraced by many defeats, are much to be preferred to a base acquiescence in bondage. For it is at least certain that we are not abandoned to ourselves, that God has not left us to our own hard and careless way, that we are not recklessly following the course of our own inclinations, that we have not silenced the divine voice, and driven away the Spirit by our wickedness and perversity. We know that it is possible so to grieve Him, that He will cease to help us; so to neglect prayer and communion with God, that we no longer have any faith in their reality and efficacy; to be so selfish, so proud, so false, so abandoned to indulgence, that we cease even to admire self-sacrifice or meekness or truth or purity. But he who *cannot do the things that he would*, whether these are more commonly good or evil, has still ample cause for hope and confidence, and for manfully devoting his whole will and energy to the struggle which the Spirit and

the flesh are waging in his soul. Let him consider how many and various are his helps. He has the right of approaching God in prayer, the assurance that his *Father who is in heaven will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him*. He has the teaching of God's word, and the example of God's servants, who have fought the good fight and won the victory, and received the crown. He has the sympathy, the encouragement, the prayers of faithful Christians who have past or are passing through struggles like his own. He has a right to share in the ordinances and ministrations of Christ's Church. And if in the course of God's Providence, as sometimes befalls us in this widely extended country, he is for a time removed from all such human aid, he may at least be sure that he has the help and blessing of that heavenly Friend who has Himself experienced the bitterness of solitary struggles with evil, and *having suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted*. The flesh will not gain the victory in any human heart, unless the appointed weapons of warfare are laid aside by the uncertain and irresolute will.

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XLVI.

Luke xi.
13.

Mark i. 13.
Matt.
xxvi. 40.
Heb. ii. 18.

ii. But if I have spoken words of encouragement, I must not forget to speak words of warning also. I have explained the text to represent to us a contest more or less equal, with the victory still trembling in the balance, with one wing perhaps of the Spirit's army pressing on hopefully and resolutely, the other scattered in cowardly and miserable flight.

Warning
as to the
struggle.

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But such a sketch must not remain too long an accurate picture of any man's soul. Or rather it certainly will not. It can only be true of the earlier and more imperfect stages of the Christian course. If it is protracted, the day will soon be lost. Doubtless the condition of the true Christian is one of conflict to the end; he will never be free from the necessity of struggle, of watchfulness, of earnest self-control, never secure against spiritual falls, never exempt from the need of penitence, till he enters into

Heb. iv. 9. *the rest which remaineth for the people of God.* But still it must be a conflict ever tending more and more to the final and decisive victory; a crushing of defeated rebels rising in sullen mutiny, not a faint-hearted resistance to insolent foes flushed with frequent success; an occasional stumble against the obstacles besetting the narrow path which leads to life, not a wilful deviation into the broad way which ends at the gate of destruction. We must not deceive ourselves by thinking that we lose nothing by only yielding to a single temptation, that a temporary defeat is of small consequence provided that we afterwards renew the contest. Each victory gained over us by the Tempter tends to separate us from God, to deaden the voice of conscience within us, and to weaken us when we are next assailed. Dropping the metaphor, and looking to the latter verses of the epistle, we cannot yield to any one of the works of the flesh, impurity, neglect of God, strife, passion, or self-indulgence, without making it harder

for us to attain any single grace of the Spirit, *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* And remember that unless we are visibly growing in all these Christian graces, we are not true members of Christ's kingdom, we are subject to the penalties of that righteous and unsparing law, which was enacted to restrain and punish the disobedient.

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XLVI.

4. And thus we are led to the conclusion of the whole passage, which will suggest to us a yet more searching enquiry into our hearts and lives. *They that are Christ's crucified¹ the flesh with the affections and lusts.* They crucified them once for all in resolution and intention when they realized to themselves their baptismal obligation, when they awoke to the consciousness that they were Christ's redeemed people, and determined by God's grace to take His blessed Gospel as the rule of their lives. And they still continue to crucify them day by day, manfully and deliberately to resist them, never to rest till they have cast them out from their souls. The very word *crucify* shews us how and in what strength this must be done. As Christ was crucified, so must our old self, our flesh, our natural inclinations, be crucified with Him, *that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* It must be crucified by our readiness to *take up our cross and follow*

*Crucifixion
of the flesh.*

Rom. vi. 6.
Matt. x.
38.
Luke xiv.
27.

¹ I omit the word *have*, as I did in the paraphrase. The tense used implies that the crucifixion of the flesh took place at a particular time.

SERMON Him, to sacrifice our own inclinations, and mortify
XLVI. our own passions through our union with Him who is our Redeemer and our Head, and from whom flows spiritual aid to every member of His body. We must join ourselves to Him in heart and will by looking to His death as our means of reconciliation with the Father, and to His life as the power through which we are saved from the bondage of the *flesh with its affections and lusts*. Therefore, brethren, whatever occupations lead us to Christ, whatever practices make it easier for us to remember His example on earth, and to look up to Heaven for His blessing, whatever thoughts and habits help us to dedicate to Him our daily employments and relaxations, our individual life, and family life, and public life, these things are to be prized and cultivated as our safeguards against the daily assaults of the enemies of our souls. That we may be the true sons of God, we must be led by the Spirit of God, we must fix our affections on things above, on all that is pure and just and holy, we must never dare to trifle with our heavenly calling, with the faith which we profess now, and the hopes which are set before us hereafter.

DIBBOGHUR, ASSAM,
1861.

XLVII. ST PAUL'S GLORYING.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

GAL. VI. 14.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

THE old saying, that example is better than precept, SERMON XLVII. is generally regarded as an obvious sentiment of trite Two-fold interest of the Epistle to the Galatians: historical and doctrinal. morality, yet in reality, like most other maxims which have become commonplace from their simple truthfulness, it is not only full of practical wisdom, but even receives illustrations of a higher kind than such as are furnished by the mere ordinary occurrences of human life. God has been pleased to act upon it in the revelation which He has made to us of His will and our destinies. The Gospel itself, the good news which He has communicated to man, is a biography. Even in those parts of the New Testament which are specially devoted to the promulgation and defence of Christian doctrine, the historical and biographical element is conspicuous. For instance, this epistle to the Galatians, from which

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XLVII.

Acts xiv.
15.

the text is taken, is in one view a dissertation on the spiritual character of Christianity, a protest against shackling its free spirit by the forms and ceremonies and principles of action which prevailed under the Mosaic law. Yet how life-like, how truthful is the shape in which this teaching is conveyed to us, how closely is it connected with human interests and sympathies, how plainly we see in it the struggles and difficulties which surrounded a man *of like passions with ourselves*, and which arose, like many troubles which beset us now, from human ignorance and perversity. We are not taught the true character of Christ's Gospel by a series of abstract propositions, but by the historical fact that there was among the Galatian Christians a party of judaizing teachers who held that it was not enough for a convert to believe in Christ crucified, unless he also conformed to the Jewish law, and therefore submitted to the initiatory rite of circumcision. And this doctrine, plainly opposed to the essence of the Gospel as the redemption of man's spirit from bondage, and as a catholic religion designed for every age and every race, is refuted not by a mere polemical discussion, but by a letter, bearing abundant traces that it was written by a living person, to a congregation of living and thinking men, in whom he was strongly interested, filled with the recollection of past intercourse, and kindness formerly received, with expressions of a father's love and anxiety for his spiritual children, with traits which vividly illustrate the

author's character, and with allusions to his past life, his wants, and even his bodily infirmities. SERMON XLVII.

2. It is plain that a writing of this kind, apart from the truths which it makes known to us, and its sacred character as a vehicle of divine revelation, has a special importance, as containing historical materials of real persons and real events, and therefore as affording evidences to the truth of Christianity. Moreover its moral and spiritual precepts, such for instance as that given in the text, acquire additional force, when we regard them not as mere abstract theories expressing what ought to be done, but as positive assertions of what a living man has done, and what therefore we may do and ought to do, since we are partakers of the very hopes and promises which nerved him to active holiness. Thus there is not only a deep interest, but there may be, by God's blessing, a real spiritual profit and confirmation of our faith, in noticing the incidental allusions to St Paul's own circumstances which abound in the passage chosen for to-day's epistle, surrounding the text on every side, and stamping it with an unmistakable impress of genuine truth, as the actual expression of his habitual feelings and practice. The very first verse of it, *Ye see how large a letter I have written with my own hand* is one of these, though its true meaning is not seen in our English version. For the words *how large a letter* are not a correct rendering of the original, which rather means *in what large letters*, referring not to the length of the epistle to

*References
to St Paul's
own circum-
stances in
the epistle
for the day.*

- SERMON XLVII. the Galatians, (which is by no means so long as some other epistles), but to the style of St Paul's handwriting, which seems to have been of a large unsightly description, possibly from his being, as a Jew, unaccustomed to write the Greek characters, or from his eyesight, which there is some reason to think was weak and defective. Again the same verse informs us that St Paul wrote this epistle to the Galatians *with his own hand*, perhaps because he was alone when he wrote it, or perhaps to give the Galatians a strong proof of the importance which he attached to it, the doctrines conveyed in it, and his grief at their denial of them, for we learn from other passages that he generally employed an amanuensis, as for example from the latter part of the Epistle to the Romans, where we find that one Tertius copied the letter from the Apostle's dictation: *I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.* Again, in a later verse of the passage which we are considering, we find a reference at once to St Paul's previous history and to his bodily infirmities. *From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.* These marks were the scars of his wounds, received in the service of His Master. They remind us, in this pathetic allusion to the past, of many sorrowful narratives in the Acts of the Apostles, of *the bonds and afflictions* which, the Holy Ghost Himself being witness, *awaited* the apostle *in every city*, how he was stoned at Lystra, and scourged at Philippi, how when compared with
- Inferred from Acts xxiii. 5.
Gal. iv. 13, 15, &c.
- Rom. xvi. 22.
- Acts xx. 23.

other disciples of Christ he was *in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft, ... in journeyings often, in perils of waters, ... in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.* Doubtless these historical references and points of human interest in the epistles are of far less importance than the revealed secrets of the Gospel which are there made known to us, but it has pleased God to bestow upon us the great gift of Christianity in such a form that the two are inseparably connected; the history of living men is the outer court or vestibule through which we must pass into the inmost sanctuary of Christian truth. We shall feel more deeply that we must ourselves glory in the cross of Christ, and be crucified unto the world, if we perceive how fully this Christian experience was realized by St Paul. Let us then, guided by the recollection that we are dealing with the deepest convictions of a man like ourselves, and with convictions which, as a matter of fact, produced the strongest effects on his conduct, go carefully through to-day's epistle, and pray that God may bring home its teaching, and the example which it sets before us, to our inmost hearts.

3. *See in what large and awkward letters I have written unto you with my own hand. As are my letters, so is my practice¹. I do not try to make a fair*

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XLVII.

Acts xiv.

19. xvi.

23.

2 Cor. xi.

23 ff.

Para-

phrase.

Gal. vi. 11.

12.

¹ The connection is obscure, but this explanation of it (which is Alford's) seems correct.

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- show outwardly: those who wish to make a fair show in the flesh, to wear a specious exterior, are they who are persuading and forcing you to be circumcised, and are mixing up the Law with the Gospel, in order that they may not suffer persecution at the hands of the bigoted Jews scattered about Galatia¹. For these*
13. *adopters and instigators of circumcision do not themselves keep the whole Law, but select parts of it for observance, according to their own capricious notions, while they wish you to be circumcised, that they may glory, not in your spiritual condition, but in your*
14. *outward and visible union with their party. But far be it from me to glory in any specious outward show, or in the adhesion of a number of nominal converts, who do not really appreciate the Gospel. I glory in nothing save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world, all that is unspiritual and opposed to the true Gospel, is crucified to me, and I to the world, so that all connection is broken off between the world and me, and each regards*
15. *the other as dead. To one who thus clings only to the cross of Christ, such questions as these false teachers raise are absolutely nothing. For he knows that neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; neither the assertion of Judaism nor its denial, neither forms nor the absence of forms: nothing availeth except a new creature, a heart truly converted to God through faith in Christ crucified.*

¹ See Josephus, *Antiq.* XVI. 6. 2.

This is the spiritual rule which will raise us to a region far above all discussion on ceremonies and outward things: and as many as guide their lives by this rule, may God send them peace and mercy, for they are His true Israel, since "if we be Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Henceforth let no one trouble me by such disputations: for my connection with my Master is sufficiently plain: I bear in my body the marks of Jesus, as slaves are branded with signs to indicate their owners. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

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XLVII.
16.
Gal. iii. 29.
17.
18.

4. We see then that there once lived a man, who though chosen and inspired to teach us God's will, was yet called upon to resist ignorant or obstinate perversions of the truth, troubled by opposition and ingratitude, distrest by bodily pain, even hindered in his work by bodily weakness; and we have to enquire in what hopes and principles he lived, that we may learn what helps and comforts are ours, who have obtained like precious faith with him, and who may sometimes be called, though in far lighter measure, to share his troubles. His hopes and principles and helps are all comprised in the text, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* His glory was in the cross of Christ, not his Lord and Saviour only, but ours: so that the same cross should be our glory likewise. And this in four ways:

*Reasons for
glorying in
the cross.*
2 Pet. i. 1.

SERMON
XLVII. (i) on account of the truth which it reveals;
(ii) of the estimate which it enables us to form of the things around us; (iii) on account of its effects on the heart and life; and (iv) on account of the hopes and encouragements which we derive from it.

*Truth re-
vealed in
the cross.*

i. A Christian will rejoice in the truth revealed to him in the cross of Christ. That truth is the forgiveness of sins. We may well glory when we reflect that through His cross we are reconciled to the Father, that because He died upon the cross
Heb. x. 22. we may *draw near to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith*, approaching Him as His forgiven
Heb. x. 14. children, *perfected for ever in His sight by that one offering*. St Paul is never weary of putting this forward as the reason for His glorying: telling us
1 Cor. i. 24. that the knowledge of *Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God*; esteeming all other knowledge as worthless in comparison with this, and
2 Cor. v. 20, 21. praying us *in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, because He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*. Let us then, brethren, prove that we glory in this knowledge, by personally applying it to ourselves, regarding Christ's sacrifice as offered not merely for the sins of the whole world (because this habit of thought is not close and individual enough), but for our own sins, yours and mine, and therefore as having freed us all, you and me, from the power of sin, and thus enabled us to shake it off for ever, and

to begin a new life of holiness according to His own faultless pattern. SERMON XLVII.

ii. Again, a Christian will also glory in the cross of Christ on account of the estimate which it furnishes of the true value of this world's aims and principles. For he will learn from it that there is nothing to be so utterly shunned as sin, nothing so earnestly desired as holiness. The cross is the measure of all things, because the death of God's own Son was the greatest event in the world's history, the most awful of all conceivable sacrifices. And why was this marvellous event ordered, this mighty sacrifice offered and accepted? Not to save us from worldly loss and inconvenience, but from sin, not to make us great, or powerful, or rich, or wise in earthly wisdom, but to make us holy. And so, while others are *walking in a vain shadow, disquieting themselves in vain, heaping up riches, but not knowing who shall gather them*, the Christian is at least sure that he has set before himself the true end of life, the true riches which can never be taken from him. *The cross measures the importance of all things.*

iii. And therefore a Christian will also glory in the effects produced by the cross in his heart and life. These are summed up in the words of the text, *the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*; and are stated more in detail when our Lord tells us to *deny ourselves, and take up each for himself, his own cross*, whatever it be which God calls him to bear, and so bearing it to follow our Saviour; *Effects of the cross.*

Matt. xvi.

24.

- SERMON XLVII.
 1 Cor. xiii. or when St Paul sketches for us the wonderful power of that Christian charity or love, which springs from faith in Christ's cross; or when he describes Christians as *kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake*
 Eph. iv. 32. *hath forgiven them; or as thinking on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.* The world which is thus crucified to us, is doubtless contrasted with *the new creature in Christ Jesus*¹, without which, as we are told immediately afterwards, *neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision.* Whatever therefore belongs to our old corrupt unrenewed nature is crucified or dead to the true Christian: he no longer cares for it or desires it: he is freed from that bondage to it under which we must fall, if we grow up and advance in life with our hearts untouched by the only knowledge which St Paul cared to possess, and spread
 1 Cor. ii. 2. among his converts, the knowledge of *Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*

*Helps
 found in
 the cross.*

- iv. Once more, the Christian glories in the cross of Christ, because he can draw from it the assurance of present help, and the omen of future victory. So again St Paul says, that *he knew in whom he had believed*, and could *do all things through Christ who strengthened him.* And so also we, my brethren, in the hour of danger and temptation, may look up to that cross and Him who hung upon it,

2 Tim. i.
 12.
 Phil. iv.
 13.

¹ Calvin.

and remember how in the last moments of bitterest suffering, He prayed that His Father would pardon the ignorant, and promised that the penitent should be with Him in paradise. And as we know that He passed from the pains of the cross to that divine glory in which *He ever liveth to make intercession for us*, we rejoice in the assurance that He now prays for us also, and helps our infirmities by His Spirit, so that *in His blood we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by a new and living way*. SERMON XLVII.
Luke xxiii.
34, 43.
Heb. vii.
25.
Heb. x. 19,
20.

5. These, brethren, are some of the reasons why St Paul found in Christ's cross His only ground of boasting, and why that which was of old a symbol of ignominy has now become a symbol of glory. Outwardly no doubt it is sufficiently honoured. It is the chosen ornament of power, of valour, of earthly greatness: it marks the house of God in which the Christian worships, and the resting place in which his body awaits the trumpet of the resurrection. We stamp it on our symbols of sovereignty, on our trophies, on our churches, and on our graves: but, O my brethren, that we could be also persuaded, like St Paul, to stamp it on our hearts! Perhaps we are kept from it by intellectual difficulties; we look within and find that "all our mind is clouded with a doubt;" we think the revelation of God in Christ too great, too wonderful, too far removed from our own sense and experience to be true. Let us then try whether this difficulty will not vanish if we en-

SERMON XLVII.
 Ps. xxxiv. 8. large our experience, if we ourselves *taste and see how gracious the Lord is*, if we strive practically to learn what can be effected for us by the love of Christ and the power of His cross. Or perhaps we have never thought about these things with any real earnestness, have never seriously tried to serve God, but have lived according to the opinion and example of the world. Let us remember then that Christ was crucified to raise men above such a life of self-pleasing, and try whether our hearts will not be warmed and our sympathies quickened by the thought of One *who gave Himself for us that He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. Or, again, it may be that under a decent exterior we are hiding some sinful habit; or that our hearts are cold, lifeless, indifferent to all serious impressions; or that we are living lives of positive wickedness, yet not uncontrolled by the warnings of conscience and aspirations after better things. Or, lastly, we may be wearied and sated by worldly activity and worldly success, and desirous of a rest that remaineth, and of *a better and an enduring substance*. Whatever be our difficulty, whatever our moral sickness, let us come to Christ's cross, and there seek our deliverance and our cure, pleading His merits, and claiming His intercession. Let us come, as St Paul came, in the full assurance of faith, asking for pardon for the past, because *the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*, and for whatever

1 Pet. ii.
 3.

Tit. ii. 14.

Heb. x. 34.

Isai. liii. 6.

help is needful for the future, for *He that spared* SERMON XLVII.
not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, Rom. viii.
how shall He not with Him also, freely forgive us all 32.
things?

GOWHATTI, ASSAM, 1861.

XLVIII. INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EPH. III. 14—16.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.

SERMON
XLVIII.
Prayer.

THE epistle chosen for this day's service furnishes us with an example of intercessory prayer. By "intercessory prayer," we mean prayer for others. Now I question, brethren, whether we think as much of this Christian duty as we ought to do. I trust indeed that each of us at least prays for himself. Certainly if any one in this congregation neglects so great a privilege, his presence in this church is almost a mockery. For in truth prayer is the foundation of all personal Christianity; it is the simplest and most obvious of religious habits. It is the natural cry of the awakened soul, roused to a sense of sin, and feeling how deeply it needs the help and mercy of God. It is our appointed means of access to our Father. Even man's natural conscience suggests it as afford-

ing us a hope of comfort in time of trouble; but SERMON XLVIII.
 revelation confirms the suggestion, stamps it with
 divine authority, and promises to those who act upon
 it God's abundant blessing. We are encouraged to
 pray by the assurance that God will hear our pray
 ers, because He is our Father, and because even an
 earthly father seeks to gratify his children's wishes,
 for if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto Matt. vii.
 our children, much more shall our Father who is in 11.
 heaven give good things to them that ask him. Prayer
 is indeed the very life of the soul, its neglect leads
 to coldness, to indifference, to spiritual death; and if
 any one complains that his progress in goodness
 is very slow, very different from the wishes and aspi-
 rations which he forms in his best moments, and that
 his struggles against temptation are but rarely suc-
 cessful, I would ask him whether he has learned
 really to pray, and realizes to himself in practice the
 meaning of such simple and well-known promises
 as these, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and* Matt. xi.
heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Whatsoever ye 28.
shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it Joh. xvi.
you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name: 23, 24.
ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

2. But it is not about prayer in general that Interces-
 I wish to-day to speak to you, but about that par- sion.
 ticular form of it, which we have called *intercessory*
 prayer, that is, prayer for others. For this duty is
 not so obvious as the other. To simple-hearted
 believers indeed it seems natural enough. It accords

SERMON
XLVIII. well with the pious logic of an early age to argue
thus :

For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves, and those who call them friend ?

But in a more refined age subtle difficulties are raised against this primitive creed, and men begin to say that while they can conceive how he who prays is brought by his prayer into communion with God, they cannot understand how his prayer can benefit another, seeing that each must work out his own salvation, and either open his heart to the Holy Spirit by his own efforts, or counteract God's grace by his own carelessness and sin. But subtle objections of this nature proceed on the supposition that God's ways are as our ways, that we know the manner of His Spirit's operations, and can sound the depths of His power and wisdom. They assume that prayer has no other efficacy than that of producing a religious influence on the mind of the person praying. Any difficulty about intercessory prayer is only a part of the great difficulty which stops human speculation at the point where the spiritual world is linked with the natural world, where the seen touches upon the unseen, where man is permitted to enter the Presence of God. Instead of raising questions about intercessory prayer, we should accept it as a duty enjoined, and a privilege bestowed in the Bible, we should regard it as a point not of speculation but of

practice, we should not enquire how God helps those SERMON
XLVIII. for whom we pray, but return thankfully to the simpler faith of our fathers, and reverently draw near to Him in behalf of others no less than ourselves.

3. The subject will be made clearer if I endeavour at the outset to shew, what intercessory prayer is, from the example contained in to-day's epistle; and then go on to explain that it is a natural inference from the first principles of the Gospel, is plainly enjoined upon us in Scripture, and is full of blessing, not only to others, but also to ourselves. I will begin then by trying to draw out, by a paraphrase and explanation, the full meaning of the epistle. In order to do this, I must ask those who have Bibles in church to turn to them, in order to understand the meaning of the words *for this cause*, with which our text begins. For those words do not immediately depend on the desire exprest in the first verse of to-day's epistle. That verse (the 13th of the third chapter) is itself closely connected with the previous passage, and only slightly with that which we have to consider to-day. What then is the cause for which St Paul bows his knees unto the Father? The answer will take us back to the first verse of the chapter, where we again see the words, *for this cause, I Paul*. But you will notice that no verb follows them. Eph. iii. 1. *For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward . . .* And then follows a long parenthesis, ending with the

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ii. 22.

13th verse of the chapter, till the sentence with which the chapter began is completed in our text, and we find that the words, *for this cause I Paul*, standing alone and without a verb in the first verse, are completed by the clause, *bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in the 14th. And hence it follows that, in order to find the cause for which St Paul thus bowed in prayer to God, we must go back even to the end of the second chapter, where we read that Christians *are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit*. This then is the reason why the apostle prays for the Ephesians, because they are united together as partakers of glorious privileges and hopes. I will only remark, in case that any one should marvel at a construction so complicated as this, that such long parentheses, abrupt sentences, and digressions from the subject, suggested by some incidental word or thought, are quite in accordance with the style, and even with the character of St Paul. But this is a point which we must not pursue further, and therefore after thus much of needful preliminary explanation, I proceed to the paraphrase of the passage chosen for to-day's epistle.

Para-
phrase.
Eph. iii.
13.

4. *I beseech you*, says the Apostle to his Ephesian converts, *not to lose heart in the midst of the tribulations which I suffer for you, as a prisoner at Rome, seeing that they are your glory, because they prove that God so cares for you, that He sends His servants to preach the Gospel to you, and endure perse-*

cution in winning you to Christ. On this account SERMON XLVIII. then, returning at last to my former subject, because you are fellow members of the Church, taught and ¹⁴ guided by the Spirit, I bend my knees, and direct my prayer to the Father¹, from whom every family in the ¹⁵ heavens and on earth, every company of angels, and every household, nation, and race of men, has its name and constitution and order, since His relation to us as our Father is the perfect pattern of all earthly fatherhood and all family love; and I beseech him to give ¹⁶ you, in accordance with the fulness of His own glory, and the abundance of His perfections, the blessing of strength received from His almighty power, and instilled by His Spirit into the inner man, that is, into your conscience and reason, the noblest portion of your being; so that Christ may take up His lasting abode ¹⁷ in your hearts by your faith, which opens the door for His entrance, and keeps Him among you; while you are rooted and grounded in love, as the support and basis of the whole Christian character, that so you ¹⁸ may be fully able to comprehend, with all the true people of God, what is the length and breadth and

¹ The words of our Lord Jesus Christ are not supported by the best authorities, and interrupt the connection of the passage, which contains (if we may so speak on a very deep and solemn subject) a kind of play upon the Greek words for *Father* and *family*, *pater* and *patria*. It is not possible to express this simply and directly in English. "I bend my knees to the *Father*, from whom every earthly and heavenly relationship, every *fatherhood* and *fatherland*, has its name and support." "It is from *pater* that every *patria* derives its appellation: οὐκ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀνηλθεν ἄνω, ἀλλ' ἀνωθεν ἦλθεν εἰς ἡμᾶς." (Severian, quoted by Ellicott.)

SERMON XLVIII. *depth and height, the infinite greatness of the love of Christ, and to know His love, though in truth it surpasses all knowledge which we can conceive, that you may be filled up, even as God is filled, with wisdom and power and love. Such is my prayer for you: but to Him who can do all this for you most abundantly, beyond everything which we can ever pray for or even imagine, according to the power of the Holy Ghost working in our souls, to Him, I say, be ascribed the glory that is due to Him outwardly in the Church, and inwardly in the communion of each true Christian with Christ Jesus, to all generations of eternity. Amen.*

Intercessory prayer essential to Christianity.

5. Thus then, brethren, we see with what intense love and earnestness the Apostle interceded for his Ephesian converts, praying that God would bestow on them all spiritual blessings, and enable them to grow in holiness, till they should even become sharers of His own perfection. So we learn what intercessory prayer is, how loving, how tender, how full of pure unselfish care for those in whose behalf it is offered. And I said that this duty of interceding for others follows directly from the first principles of Christianity. This also St Paul teaches us in the present passage. Remember the reason for his intercession which we traced by looking back to the second chapter, because Christians *are built together by the Spirit* as God's habitation or temple. They *are built together*; that is, Christianity is a social religion, not one in which each man lives for himself

Eph. ii.
22.

only, and is himself separately connected with God, SERMON XLVIII.
 but one in which all are united as the lively stones of 1 Pet. ii. 5.
 a spiritual house, knit together as a body receiving Col. ii. 19.
 nourishment from the Head, even Christ, brethren Joh. xv. 1.
 and children of the same family, branches of the
 same Vine, bound to care for each other and to love
 each other, and therefore, as the chief sign and proof
 of such love, to pray for each other. As through
 love to man Christ died upon the cross, so has He
 ordained that His Church shall be founded on love,
 and that this love shall shew itself in mutual help,
 mutual kindness, mutual self-denial, and mutual
 prayer; not only in common worship, such as we
 offer in the Lord's Prayer, for then we pray indeed
 for others, yet still include ourselves in the supplica-
 tion, but also in mutual prayer and intercession,
 when for a time we forget ourselves, and pass from
 the thought of our own wants to the wants of our
 brethren.

6. And as this duty of intercession follows from *Interces-*
 the very idea of the Christian Church, so is it incul- *sory prayer*
 cated in Scripture by constant precept and solemn *frequently*
 example. The most striking instance is the great *enjoined.*
 intercessory prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, when
 at the end of His last meal and parting words of love
 and comfort, He *lifted up His eyes to heaven*, and Joh. xvii.
 commended to the blessing of His Father those 1, 6, 15,
 whom *He had given Him out of the world*, praying 17, 23.
 that they might be *kept from the evil, sanctified*
through the truth, and made perfect in one. Then He

SERMON
XLVIII.
Luke xxiii.
34.

prayed for His friends, but yet later, as He hung upon the cross, He prayed for His enemies also, and besought His Father that they might be forgiven.

James v.
15.

Just so we are bidden, frequently and in many particulars, to pray for one another. We are told by St James that *the prayer of faith shall save the sick*, and so are encouraged to pray not only for the spiritual wants of our brethren, according to the pattern of to-day's Epistle, but for the removal of their temporal sorrows also. St Paul assures the Thessaloni-

1 Thess. i.
2.

nians that he *makes mention of them in his prayers*, and desires in return their prayers for himself. He begs the Colossians to pray that God would give him opportunities of preaching the Gospel, and *open*

Col. iv. 3.

unto him a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ. We are to feel for others as for ourselves, to love one another, as Christ loved us, and therefore to ask God in His own good time to remove the sufferings of others, just as we seek deliverance from our own, to pray for one another, as Christ prayed for all.

*Blessings to
be expected
from in-
tercessory
prayer.*

7. And while we entirely deny that the object of such intercession is merely to nourish a mutual feeling of love and sympathy among the members of Christ's body, while we maintain that God is pleased, (in virtue of laws which transcend our understanding), to shape His purposes and government of the world in accordance with the acceptable prayers and intercessions of His children, we thankfully acknowledge that this practice of intercessory prayer is rich in

blessing, not only to those for whom we pray, but to ourselves also. A principle, which helps to realize the idea of Christ's Church, must be fruitful in glorious results. Let us consider who they are for whom we are specially bound to pray. For near and dear friends and kinsfolk, for those living around us, engaged in common occupations, or mixing in common society with ourselves, for our country, our rulers, for this land of our sojourn, for the ministers of God's word, for the poor, the sick, the afflicted, for those who are living and dying in ignorance of Christ's salvation, for our enemies, if we have any; and among all these various classes for any one who specially needs God's help, and with whose wants or weaknesses we happen to be specially acquainted. If we would but remember such as these in our prayers, our charities would be enlarged, our sense of duty quickened and extended, jealousies and animosities healed, our best affections deepened and sanctified, our whole social life and intercourse with others pervaded by a sense of responsibility, and a recognition of God's presence. We should despise the trifling causes of variance and ill-feeling which, especially in a small society, often separate friend from friend. We should regard with a yet deeper sorrow and repentance any real enmity and malice, which we might, if we would, either remove from our own hearts, by recollecting the duty of Christian love and forgiveness, or from the hearts of others by frank explanation and apology. Petty personal dislikes

SERMON
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XLVIII.

would be cured through very shame, long standing and deep-seated grudges through horror at the sin of rending asunder the body of Christ. Parents living far away from their children, friends severed by oceans and continents from the friends of their youth, would feel that a spiritual bond still united them, and would be consoled for the grief of separation by the confidence that those who were far away were safe, in life and death alike, under the loving care of Him to whose mercy they had been committed. Our faith in Christ's Gospel would be strengthened by the habitual prayer that it might *have free course and be glorified*. Such prayers would make us feel that the Church of Christ is a living power, an institution designed to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, to unite all men together by a spiritual bond of faith and love. And all this, let me again remind you, is over and above the direct and positive effects of our prayers, the blessings which we should gain for the absent, the help and protection which prayers earnestly and faithfully offered up in India would bring down, (how we know not), upon England, the accomplishment of the number of God's elect, and the hastening of His kingdom.

*Reality
and fer-
vency in
prayer.*

8. Only remember, brethren, in conclusion, that if we are to look for any of these blessings either for ourselves or others, our prayers must not be mere ceremonies, not the outward bending of the knee, and the repetition of the customary form, but the earnest, devoted outpourings of hearts really con-

vinced of God's mercy in Christ, and really wishing, and striving, and watching that the knowledge and experience of that mercy may be extended to all men. It is the vainest of all vain mockeries to be alone with God, and yet to fancy that we can deceive Him who trieth the very hearts and reins, to kneel as intelligent Christians in the presence of our Father, while at the same time we are repeating our task like children, longing to reach the end of it, and almost careless of its meaning¹. We may find the habit of prayer hard to attain, and worldly thoughts may often intrude upon us and distract us, but still let us persevere, in spite of the hindrances by which our soul's Enemy would keep us from prayer. If indeed our common life were more in accordance with our prayers, they would seem to us less strange and difficult. If we would try to serve God better, we should feel more pleasure and interest in seeking strength for that service by communion with Him. If we would love our brethren more, and think of them more, and help them more, it would be more natural to pray for them more, and commit them with deeper interest and more assured confidence to the blessing of our common Father, through Him who died alike for them and for ourselves.

¹ Helps. *Essays written in the intervals of business. On self-discipline.*

XLIX. CHRISTIAN UNITY.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EPH. IV. 3.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

SERMON
XLIX.
*Desire of
unity.*

THE craving for unity is a desire natural to the human mind. It is strange that this should be so, considering how ill we have succeeded in realizing it. When we look upon the condition of the world, and see nation rising up against nation, or of the society around us, and lament the struggles of class against class, and interest against interest, or of too many homes and families, and find how their unity is marred by personal jealousies and frivolous quarrels, and the rivalry of opposite manifestations of selfishness; it certainly seems hard to believe that men have any wish to be joined together by the bond of peace. And yet the facts of history seem to warrant the assertion. The greatest events which have marked the progress of the human race have

arisen from this desire for unity, manifesting itself no doubt in imperfect and unworthy forms, and always more or less subordinate to self-interest, but still real, and tangible, and leading to important practical results. Let me remind you of three great and prominent displays of this endeavour to promote unity among mankind. In early times efforts were made, often for a time outwardly successful, to effect it by conquest. Kings and warriors conceived the majestic thought of uniting the whole human race under one iron sceptre, and bringing all men into an enforced obedience to one universal law. The Assyrian, the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman, each sought in turn to gratify this desire by establishing an all-pervading despotism. Nor even in modern days have those been wanting who have set before themselves the same vision. Spain at least once in her history, France more than once, in our own days perhaps Russia, have all made the attempt, and failed. For the natural constitution of man revolts against such endeavours, and claims the indulgence of those variations which are involved in differences of race, of language, of national characteristics¹. And so another attempt has been made to realize the desire of unity by a gigantic ecclesiastical system, and by enslaving the human mind to one infallible guide. I need not stop to shew that this scheme has also proved a failure, yet it furnishes a strong testimony to the reality of the

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¹ Arnold, *Lectures on Modern History*. Lecture III.

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need which it vainly attempts to satisfy, since even in this age of light and knowledge, many are still found who seek refuge, even in so perilous a haven, from the tempests of controversy and discord. In our own time a third attempt is made to produce universal peace and brotherhood by self-interest and commercial intercourse, we are now warned against any quixotic endeavour to extirpate from the human mind the natural instinct of selfishness, and urged rather to inform and enlighten this instinct, for when men find that discord checks the progress of commerce and material improvement, and that these are necessary for the acquisition of wealth and physical enjoyment, they will be brought to harmony, it is said, by the teaching of self-interest. Thus political economy is represented not only as a science which in its own place is undoubtedly most important for our welfare, but as the real gospel of the nineteenth century; and we are told that the long lost unity of the human race will be restored by trade. But if we return to facts, we see as yet very feeble indications of any such results. Although the tendency of commerce may be to check actual war, at least between civilized powers, yet the impulses which lead to war are so strong as to counteract its influence; and as to the internal condition of states, experience shews that if commerce removes some causes of dispute, it creates many more. Indeed if we consider the actual reasons which have brought disunion into the world, and observe how subtle they are, how numerous, how

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extensive, and how they have their seat in the inmost recesses of our being, we shall confess that the remedy must be as powerful and penetrating as the disease; we shall admit that neither selfishness, nor mental bondage, nor physical force can restore that harmony which God at first imprest upon His creation, and after which man has in every age blindly and helplessly striven; failing indeed, as his own unaided efforts must fail, to satisfy the true wants of the soul; but testifying by the intensity of the struggle to the urgency of the need. We shall rather enquire whether there is not some moral and spiritual remedy for this universal evil. We shall turn our thoughts to such language as that which we have heard in to-day's epistle, *the unity of the Spirit, the bond of peace, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all*. Our thoughts will recur to words even yet more solemn in another part of the New Testament, to our Redeemer's last intercessory prayer, offered on the eve of His crucifixion, not only for the disciples who had followed His earthly ministry, but for all in every age who should *believe on Him through their word*. Listen for a moment to that prayer. *That they all* Joh. xvii. 20-23. *may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us....I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me.* The spiritual unity of all believers in Christ was

SERMON XLIX. designed to furnish an irresistible evidence to the truth of Christianity, and it is this unity which St Paul is urging upon the Ephesians in the passage before us.

*Context
and para-
phrase of
the epistle.*

Eph. iii.
17 ff.

2. In the earlier portion of his letter to them, consisting of the first two chapters, he had spoken of the stupendous greatness of the Gospel, and the blessing of those privileges which, as believers in the Gospel, they were invited to share. At the end of the third chapter, he had prayed that they might be *strengthened by God's Spirit in the inner man*, and that *Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith*, so that they might *comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height*, the boundless extent of His love. Then he turns from prayer to exhortation, and in the passage chosen for to-day's epistle, he warns them that *therefore*, since such are their privileges and their blessings, they must not throw them away by polluting their hearts with the antichristian feelings of variance and ill-will. He adds force to his exhortation by reminding them of his own sufferings for the Gospel, addressing them as a prisoner, (for when he wrote this letter he was in bonds at Rome), and not only so, but as *the prisoner in the Lord*, (not, as our version has it, *of the Lord*, which does not represent the force of the original, but *in the Lord*), that is, in union with the Lord Jesus Christ, a prisoner through connection with Him, and devotion to His service, and earnestly maintaining that union, whether in

bondage or freedom, in happiness or trouble, in life or death. *I beseech you therefore*, he says, *I, the prisoner of the Lord* (the English version does not sufficiently express the emphasis of this appeal), *to walk worthy of the glorious calling wherewith ye were called, and of which I have just been speaking; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, by bearing with one another in love; earnestly striving to maintain the unity of which the Holy Spirit is the Author, being joined together by that bond which is peace. Remember that there is one body, the whole community of Christians, and one Spirit which animates that body, as also ye were called in one hope of blessedness revealed to you in that calling. There is one Lord Jesus Christ who governs the Church, one faith by which we lay hold of Him, one baptism into fellowship with Him; and finally, one God and Father of all men, who rules over all by His sovereign power, pervades all by His providence¹, and dwells in the hearts of all by His Spirit.*

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Eph. iv. 1.

3. Here then, brethren, we find sketched for our acceptance a fourth scheme of unity, neither the unity of outward force, nor the unity of mental tyranny, nor the unity of self-interest, but the unity of the Spirit, Christian unity. Let us see whether we have here any better hopes of abolishing that

*The unity
of the Spi-
rit.*

¹ ὁ προνοῶν καὶ διοικῶν (Chrysostom). I agree with Ellicott (against Alford) that there is no reference here to the doctrine of the Trinity. The words, *one God and Father of all*, seem fatal to such a view.

SERMON XLIX. discord and enmity which have deformed God's creation, than in those human endeavours which have so conspicuously failed. To this end let us consider (i) the nature of this unity, and (ii) the means by which it is realized and maintained.

Its nature. i. The latter part of the passage teaches us what Christian unity is, how and in what sense Christ makes us one. It depends in the first place on a general unity of outward profession, whereby all call themselves by Christ's Name, and claim to belong to that body of which He is the Head. Next it implies that all submit to the teaching and quickening influence of that Holy Spirit by which the body of Christ is moved and vivified. All must acknowledge a common Lord, all must be animated by the same principle of faith in Him, and all are stamped with His Name in baptism, as the badge and seal of their common profession. Thus laid hold of by Christ through baptism, and laying hold of Him through faith, all are permitted to approach

Rom. viii. God in the spirit of adoption, and to cry *Abba*
 15.
 Gal. iv. 6. *Father*, as forgiven and reconciled children in Christ Jesus. And thus Christians become one, and their unity consists in a loyal submission to the sovereign will of Him, who being above all as supreme Ruler, by His providence governs and directs all, and by His Spirit teaches and enlightens all.

Means by which it is maintained. ii. Such then is the nature of that unity which is proposed to us in the Gospel, as the one true and divinely appointed restoration of the long lost

harmony of the human race. And now let us go back to the earlier verses of to-day's epistle, and learn from them the means by which we must *endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. The means rest with ourselves; they consist in self-control, self-discipline, the diligent pursuit of all that is good, the earnest endeavour to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*. Some of them, those apparently which most directly concern the subject, are mentioned in the passage before us, *lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering*. *Lowliness* implies a due estimate of ourselves¹, a conviction of sin: the lowly man has the same sense of personal unworthiness as those whom the Lord describes as *poor in spirit*, and to whom He gave His first blessing, and promised the kingdom of heaven. *Meekness* rests on lowliness as its foundation; it accepts in all humility God's rebukes and chastisements, whether these proceed directly from Himself, or through men as His instruments: it is the exact opposite of that arrogant self-examination, that personal vanity, that eager grasping after our real or imaginary rights, that inordinate assertion of our own dignity, from which flow half the discord and rivalry which distract human society. And *long-suffering* or *forbearance* is concerned directly with our relations towards those around us; it is patient, not swift to exact satisfaction for a personal injury, ever ready to leave to the offender a place for repentance, it gives the soft answer which turneth

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Matt. v. 3.

¹ See Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*.

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Eph. i. 3.
ii. 1. iii.
20.

away wrath, and when it is reviled, revileth not again. In this way then, by *forbearing one another in love*, by earnestly striving to be peaceful and long-suffering, even when the natural man is most rebellious and contentious, the unity of the Spirit is maintained. I said that this must be done by our own efforts, but most surely I did not mean that those efforts will be unblest and unaided, or that they alone could accomplish it. You remember, I trust, the force and connection which we assigned to the word *therefore* in to-day's epistle. *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you.* Because we are called to such inestimable privileges, because God has blest us *with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*, because we are *quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*, because *God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*, therefore I urge you to do what is only possible through His help, *to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* If we have faith in one Lord, and in His Name seek help from the Father and Ruler of all, who by His providence orders all that concerns us, and dwells in the hearts of Christ's people by His Spirit, then we shall receive strength from Him to conquer ourselves, to exchange our pride and over-vehemence for lowliness and meekness, to be forbearing rather than unforgiving, willing to trust with a surer confidence to the bond of love, than to the violence of self-assertion and self-will.

4. You see then, brethren, that Christian unity differs very much from those attempts at unity of which we have spoken. We can detect the elements of weakness in those attempts, we can understand why they have failed. Physical force may at any time be overcome by determined resistance. The fiction of an infallible Church will be detected as ignorance is cleared away. Selfish calculations will often be mistaken, and are always liable to be disturbed by human passions and conflicting interests. But the unity of the Spirit rests on a different foundation, and seeks to accomplish its aim by different agencies. It enslaves neither the body nor the mind. It invites all men to trust in a common Saviour, to accept as their rule of life the highest moral standard, even the perfection of God Himself, to submit themselves to the heavenly impulses of His Spirit, and to live together now as His children, trusting to His fatherly care and to the sure promise of a more perfect union with Him hereafter. But within these limits, it allows space for the widest variation of individual tastes and dispositions, for differences of race, of worldly position, of outward form and order, of national habits and traditions, of intellect, of education. Christian unity is spiritual, not formal; a law of liberty, not a mental bondage; a union of faith and love and principle, not of despotism or self-interest. And as such a unity seems more in accordance with human nature, so the means by which it is to be maintained seem alone efficacious. For it

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How it differs from other attempts at unity.

SERMON XLIX. depends on the conquest of pride and selfishness, on mutual help, support, and comfort, cheerfully offered whenever needed, on the willing sacrifice of individual claims and prejudices, on the resolution to live for others.

An objection and its answer.

5. No doubt it may be urged, in answer to these recommendations of the Christian scheme of unity, that it has long been revealed and preached to the world, and yet we still see brother divided against brother. But no one ever supposed that pride and selfishness would be easily conquered, or Satan's kingdom overthrown without long and earnest efforts. The Lord Jesus would not have died upon the cross, if it had been a light and easy task for us to gain the victory over our sins. And one thing is certainly true, and must be acknowledged, that wherever this unity is truly maintained, wherever we see a family, a household, a neighbourhood, a set of friends and acquaintances, really lowly, meek, long-suffering, *forbearing one another in love*, there we are sure to find that Christ's Spirit is at work, that Christian principle is recognized, and one Lord honoured, and that one faith pervades and animates each individual heart. The effect is always traceable to the same cause. If we would cling to that one faith, and live by its precepts, and cultivate that grace of love by which it works, we should hear very little of family dissensions, or class rivalries, or counter interests separating Christian from Christian, and witnessing against the Gospel in the eyes

of the heathen among whom we dwell. United together in the faith that Christ has died for us, and has *abolished in His flesh all enmity* between the members of His body, let us *consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works*, exhibiting to the multitudes of unbelievers around us the glorious sight of brethren who dwell together in unity, and gradually building up the kingdom of Christ by the influence of our faithful and devoted lives. Then, indeed, when the Christian Church thus recognizes and fulfils its true idea, will *the fulness of the Gentiles be gathered in*. Brethren, let us labour together in this spirit for the hope of the Gospel, receiving into our hearts as the very essence of Christian doctrine the great truth that *Christ died for all, that we which live should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him which died for us and rose again*.

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Eph. ii.

^{15.}
Heb. x. 24.

Rom. xi.

^{25.}

2 Cor. v.

^{15.}

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, CALCUTTA.

1861.

L. HOPES AND ENCOURAGEMENTS.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

I COR. I. 4.

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.

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L.

*Contents
and para-
phrase of
the epistle.*

THOSE of you who have read St Paul's two letters to the Corinthians with attention, and remember the many serious faults which polluted their Church, will perhaps be surprised at the praise bestowed upon them in the text, and indeed, in the whole passage chosen for to-day's epistle. Let me remind you of the affectionate terms in which the apostle addresses

1 Cor. i. 4. them by going through the passage. *I thank my God, he says, continually on your behalf, for the gifts and blessings bestowed upon you through His favour when*

5. *you became members of Christ Jesus, how in every-thing ye were enriched through your union with Him, in all instruction given to you by others, and in the knowledge of that instruction apprehended by your-*

6. *selves: as I have found that the testimony concerning*

Christ, which I delivered among you, was confirmed by the results which followed your conversion. And thus you are not inferior to any Church in the enjoyment of God's gifts and blessings, waiting for the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed in His second coming. And your hope in Him will not be disappointed, for God will doubtless confirm you to the end, and pronounce you blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ as forgiven and accepted for His sake.

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2. Such is the strong language in which St Paul, at the opening of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, expresses his thankfulness for the spiritual condition of his converts. And yet if we continue to read, we shall find that he afterwards laments the existence of evils among them, which would seem almost fatal to their Christian character. Their Church was torn by party spirit; the doctrine of Christian liberty and emancipation from the bondage of the Jewish law was so much abused, that the profligacy which disgraced the unconverted population of Corinth, and for which their city had long been infamous, had intruded even into the Christian community. An incestuous marriage had taken place, scandalous even to the heathen, between a man and his stepmother. Disputes between Christians were not settled quietly by the arbitration of a fellow-Christian, but brought before the Roman tribunals, so as to proclaim to the world the animosities which infested the Church. Some of them attended idolatrous feasts, some polluted

*Lessons to
be learned
from St
Paul's lan-
guage.*

1 Cor. i.
11 ff.

v. 1 ff.

vi. 1 ff.

viii. 10 ff.

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x. 21-27.

xi. 21 ff.

xv. 12.

ii. 1.

2 Cor. x.

11, &c.

the Holy Communion by revelry and excess, some denied the doctrine of the Resurrection, many scoffed at the simple earnestness with which St Paul preached the Gospel, and craved for excitement and intellectual subtleties. No doubt the existence of such evils among Christians was less unnatural and shocking then than it would be now. An infant Church, composed of persons rescued late in life from the degradation of heathenism, could hardly rise at once to the appreciation of Christian truth and morality, or be wholly freed from the pollutions to which they had been accustomed from their very infancy. We, indeed, who inherit a Gospel which has been preached for eighteen centuries, and whose happiness it is never to have known any doctrine opposed to its lifegiving truths, may well be ashamed if we lower its standard, and tolerate such practices as it condemns. But a laxity of principle, which with us is a reason for shame, should rather excite our pity in the case of converts won from heathenism. Thus I often think that in this country we are apt to censure too harshly the faults of native Christians, and that we do not make sufficient allowance for habits of untruth and impurity contracted long before their conversion, when we are so much shocked if we find that their Christian standard is inferior to that of the most sincere and conscientious believers among ourselves. So it was with the Corinthians: St Paul did not despair of a glorious maturity for their Church, because its infancy was weak and sickly. Yet still,

after we have made due allowance for their recent conversion, the fact remains that he speaks of them far more tenderly and hopefully than we should have expected, considering the reasons which he had for solemn warning and rebuke. And this fact may, by God's blessing, impress upon us some important lessons, which I will try with His help to bring before you.

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i. Let us observe then the great value which St Paul attaches to Christian privileges, to the fact that the Corinthians were called to the knowledge of Christ crucified, and enjoyed the ordinances of the Church. Advantages and opportunities which we are apt to undervalue as merely outward, or to receive as a matter of course, because we have never been without them, or perhaps even to despise as unspiritual, are considered by St Paul to justify a confident expectation of glorious results. No doubt he does not dwell exclusively on what is outward, for if he rejoices that Christ's doctrine was preached to the Corinthians, he also praises the intelligent knowledge with which they accepted it. But still his main reason for encouragement is that they are Christians, enriched by the possession of the Gospel, by the means of grace, by the favour of God, by the hope of heaven. And this should lead us to consider in our own hearts whether we sufficiently prize these great privileges, which belong to us in a higher degree than they did to the Corinthians, inasmuch as we have not been brought to them out of pagan darkness, but from our childhood have learned to regard

*Value of
Christian
privileges.*

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God as our reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. It is doubtful whether we sufficiently prize the privilege of only professing and calling ourselves Christians. We regard baptism as a mere ceremony, a simple admission into visible community, instead of "using it daily," like a wise and good man of old, "as a sign by which God bears witness to us that we have been received into His favour, as a ground for believing that we are truly accepted by Him, and in this faith may call upon Him¹." We are apt to assemble in our churches merely as a matter of custom, not because we hope that the common prayers of Christ's people and the exhortations of Christ's minister will help us to shake off sloth and selfishness, and teach us

¹ Pet. ii. 5. that we are united together as a *spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*. Again, among the privileges for which we ought to be most deeply thankful, is the right of approaching God in private prayer. All good Christians in all ages have felt this to be a most real and necessary help. One who lived in the early ages of the Church said that all who are in Christ must "surround the whole day with prayer²." One who entered into his rest in this land not many years ago has left his testimony that "the half-hour which he spent in prayer before the dawn of every day was the best means of cherishing a devout spirit, and securing inward comfort and joy³."

¹ Melancthon.

² Cyprian.

³ Weitbrecht.

Think then, brethren, whether such words at all express your feelings, whether prayer is to you a daily necessity, a daily reality, whether you use it as an aid in temptation, a comfort in sorrow, a support day by day to your spiritual life. So too consider whether you try actually to strengthen yourselves in Christian wisdom and piety by the devout and diligent use of God's written word: and whether you seek Christ in His Holy Communion with the real and practical expectation that you will partake of His Body through the broken bread, and of His Blood through the cup of blessing. Recollect that these ordinances, commonplace perhaps in our estimation, are the very same blessings on which St Paul thus warmly congratulated the Corinthians, and from which he expected such goodly results. Recollect too that there are many in this land who would give much for a share in them. Scattered up and down the wide extent of India, there are still, alas! Christians who are far from the reach of Christian ordinances, not indeed from those privileges of private access to their heavenly Father which can be enjoyed separately by all who are baptized into Christ's Name, but from many sources of spiritual strength, from common worship, from the Lord's Supper, from the help of a Christian minister in sickness and sorrow. Sometimes this lack of spiritual aids produces a more earnest longing for them, and a wish to live nearer to Christ because of their absence; sometimes, it is to be feared, a grievous indifference to them, and a failure in Christian

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1 Cor. x.
16.

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practice. Either result is a testimony to their importance, a call upon you to whom they are freely supplied to receive them thankfully, to use them, to resolve that you will not only be united to Christ by these ties through which God has mercifully joined you to Him outwardly, without any merit or labour of your own, but that, by His grace assisting you, you will cleave to Him with such hearty and inward efforts *that you may be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Recogni-
tion of all
that is good
in others.

ii. In the second place I would ask you to observe the wisdom and courtesy with which St Paul begins his address by words of sympathy and congratulation. It is seldom that a Church, or a party, or an individual, is so bad as to offer no opening for conciliation. When we have to rebuke and remonstrate, our advice will be received more readily, if we appreciate whatever there is of good in those whom we wish to improve. St Paul, by almost uniformly adopting this practice, shews not only his insight into human nature, but also the tenderness of his heart. All his epistles, perhaps with the single exception of that to the Galatians, by whom the first principles of the Gospel had been perverted, open with the language of kindness and hope. Take again his speeches, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. He begins his address to the Jews of Antioch by appealing to their great national traditions, and reminding them that *the God of this people of Israel chose their fathers, and exalted the people*

Acts xiii.
17.

when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt. SERMON
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When he defends his cause before Agrippa, he thinks himself happy in having for his judge one who was *expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews*, and who believed the same prophets who were his own religious guides. The reader of the English Bible may not see that this principle is also observed in the great speech at Athens, since the words *I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious* seem to imply a certain blame. But the original would have been more correctly rendered, had we read *I perceive that in all things ye are very reverential*; for he lays hold of their religious devotion as a fact common to them with himself, and engrafs on it his entreaty that they will turn from idolatrous vanities to a true and worthy object of worship, and serve the living God. Now, brethren, let us imitate this apostolic practice. How greatly is religious strife, such as that between Churchmen and Dissenters, or between different parties within our Church, freed from acrimony, if we are accustomed to dwell rather on points of agreement, than on points of difference. Indeed, whenever we are so unhappy as to be involved in a quarrel, it is our duty not only to give the *soft answer which turneth away wrath*, Acts xxvi.
2, 27. Acts xvii.
22. but to make such a temperate, candid, conciliatory statement of a grievance as often disarms an opponent. Prov. xv. To approach every dispute with the charity which *hopeth all things*, with a sincere desire for peace, and 1 Cor. xiii. with the resolution to put the best possible interpre-

SERMON L. tation on the conduct of our antagonist, is another lesson taught us by to-day's epistle.

*Use of
intellectual
gifts.*

iii. But some may think that obedience to these precepts will sometimes involve a compromise of principle, or at least encourage our natural tendency to flattery, and lead us to postpone unpleasant but needful truth to the desire of giving transient pleasure.

1 Cor. ix.
22.

It will be justly argued, that when we are *made all things to all men*, we must be so according to the apostolical, not the base and worldly application of those words. Ever ready to yield up our personal claims and wishes for the good of others, we must yet be diligent to maintain truth and righteousness,

2 Cor. i.
12.

and in *simplicity and godly sincerity to have our conversation in the world*. But St Paul's language to his converts does not countenance the unworthy practice of extravagant or indiscriminate eulogy, or involve any concealment or distortion of the truth. His words of praise are carefully chosen: he does not praise all Churches alike, but selects in each case the points which deserve his approbation. While he

Col. i. 4.
1 Thess. i.
3.

Phil. i. 5.

commends the Colossians and Thessalonians for their faith and hope and love, and the Philippians for their persevering fellowship in the Gospel, he confines his praises of the Corinthian Christians to their knowledge and intelligence, gifts naturally developed among them by their contact with the highly-polished and literary society of "a city where men could learn and hear even from inanimate objects, so great were the treasures of learning in every direction...and the

general spirit of instruction and enquiry¹." Indeed SERMON
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the censures in the subsequent chapters of the epistle turn greatly on the abuse of intellectual power, and therefore prove the reality of its existence among them. And so, brethren, let us learn, as a third lesson from to-day's epistle, to place a due estimate on knowledge and ability. In these days, if such gifts are unduly exalted by some, they are unjustly depreciated by others. That they are perfectly compatible with moral degradation is plain from the whole tenour of the two epistles which St Paul addressed to that Church in which their presence was most conspicuous. That they may be devoted to the highest and best purposes, that a man who possesses them may aspire to a degree of Christian usefulness which cannot be attained without them, is also clear from the warmth with which the Apostle thanks God that the Corinthians had been entrusted with them, and from the confidence with which he anticipates that they will be brought safely to a happy end. We shall neither misuse nor undervalue the powers of the intellect, if we remember that they are God's gifts, bestowed upon some men to a greater degree than upon others according to His will, to be employed in His service, and not for private and personal advantage, intended to minister, not to vanity, or self-will or irreverence, but to the welfare of mankind, and to the *defence and confirmation of the Gospel*, bringing with them to their possessor very great

¹ Aristid. in *Neptun*. p. 23, quoted by Wetstein on 1 Cor. i. 2.

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L. blessings, but capable, like riches or bodily health, or any other outward advantage, of tempting him into very great sin.

*Reasons for
working
in a hopeful
spirit.*

3. And now, brethren, let us try to sum up in one short lesson the various and somewhat unconnected inferences which we have endeavoured to draw from this portion of Holy Scripture. The one word which seems to comprehend them all is encouragement. Whether we look at the Christian privileges which so abundantly surround us, or at St Paul's example of recognizing what is good in every man, and working on the promising points of his character, or at the value which he attaches to gifts, such as those of the intellect, which are subsidiary and inferior to the graces of the Spirit, still the lesson seems to be that we should lift up our hearts unto the Lord, in thankfulness, and earnest effort, and assured hope of His blessing. *He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* So said St Paul to another Church, and so, I believe, could he be amongst us to-day, he would say to ours, in spite of our manifold unworthiness. Only let us use encouragement, as soldiers are intended to use it, when a trusted general leads them to battle with a few words of hearty interest and confident expectation. Let it be to us an incentive to exertion, let it suggest to us thoughts of penitence for the past, and renewed endeavours for the future, let it not harden our hearts to indifference and self-complacency. In times of trouble and de-

spondency and sickness, in the hour of death and in the day of judgement, it will avail us nothing to say, *Lord, we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets.* Neither outward privileges, nor hopeful dispositions, nor talents and acquirements, will then help us, unless we have used them for God's glory, and united ourselves in heart and will to Jesus Christ. Therefore let me again urge you to look well to this matter. Let each realize to himself what it is to be a Christian, what liberties and blessings it involves. Let him feel above all things that it means this, never to be weary in well doing, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, whereunto we are also called.

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Luke xiii.
26.

Gal. vi. 9.
2 Pet. iii.
18.

1 Tim. vi.
12.

ST SAVIOUR'S, CALCUTTA.
1861.

LI. CHRISTIAN MORALS.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EPH. IV. 30.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed till the day of redemption.

SERMON
LI.

*Compre-
hensive
character
of the
epistle.*

IT is scarcely possible to read the portion of Scripture chosen for to-day's epistle without a deep feeling of its heart-searching and comprehensive character. It may be compared with the Sermon on the Mount, as a summary of Christian morals, teaching us to be pure and true and upright, to govern our tempers, to resist the suggestions of the evil one, to be industrious, watchful over our words, kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving. It supplies us with a scheme of self-examination, a detailed standard of Christian excellence with which to contrast our own practice. It contains a short summary of at least two important chapters of Christian evidences. First, it shews us how great a change would be effected in the world, if the Gospel could *have free course and*

2 Thess.
iii. 1.

be glorified, how surely it would avail to turn earth into heaven, if its doctrines were accepted and its precepts obeyed. And besides this, it leads us to reflect how monstrous is the belief that one who, like St Paul, taught and practised this sublime system of morality, could deceive men by asserting falsely that *he had seen Jesus Christ our Lord*, and knew, on the unquestionable testimony of eye-witnesses, that He had died, and been buried, and had risen again from the tomb. Nor does it only put before us a rule of the Christian life, and raise our hearts to a worthy conception of its beauty: it also shews us how that life may be realized, and warns us of the risk of neglecting it. For we are told to open our ears to *the truth as it is in Jesus*: we are assured that *God for Christ's sake has forgiven us*, and *sealed us with His Holy Spirit*, that we may be kept in safety till the day when our redemption is made perfect. And we are exhorted not to *grieve that Spirit*, lest He leave us, and lest His seal be effaced, and we become once more the slaves of sin, and fail to receive our crown. Thus we cannot imagine a more complete combination of Christian principles and Christian practice than is found in this passage, a more perfect model for the preaching which Christ's ministers should address to Christ's people. It will be well that we should be distinctly reminded of the exact contents of the passage, before we illustrate these particulars further by any closer reference.

SERMON
LI.

1 Cor. ix.
1, xv. 3—8.

SERMON
LI.
Eph. iv. 17. *2. This then I say, the Apostle begins, and de-
clare as a doctrine necessary for all who are united
with Christ, that ye, being Gentile Christians, must
no longer live as the rest of the Gentiles who still
remain heathen are living, having their reason de-
18. graded by vain follies, darkened in their under-
standing, estranged from that divine life which was
originally in man when God was his Life and Light¹,
on account of the spiritual ignorance which has come
(Rom. i. 28.) upon them, because "they did not like to retain God
in their knowledge," through the callousness of their
19. hearts. For they, as men past feeling, having their
moral perceptions blunted, gave themselves up to wan-
tonness, so as to work out impurity of every kind, in
20. the spirit of greediness and self-seeking. But you, my
21. Christian brethren, did not thus learn Christ, if in-
deed ye did hear His voice, and were taught in living
union with Him, according to that which is truth in
Jesus, and is embodied in the doctrine of God's Son
manifest in the flesh. For such teaching is to this
22. effect, first that ye must put off the nature with which
you were clothed in your former manner of life, that
old man or unchristian character which is continually
waxing corrupt, as might be expected from those lusts
which are the servants and instruments of deceit; and
23. next, that ye must be renewed by the Holy Spirit,
24. who is the rightful governor of your mind; and so put
on the new man, or Christian character, which was
created anew according to the image of God, in the*

¹ Stier, *die Gemeinde in Christo Jesu* (Comm. on Ephesians).

righteousness and holiness which are the signs and results of truth. Wherefore, since ye are called to take up this new nature, remember its fruits. Put away lying, and speak every one truth with his neighbour, as the prophet Zechariah warns us, for we are members one of another, and so bound to mutual confidence. Again, as David says, be ye angry and sin not¹, do not on fitting occasions restrain your natural indignation against evil, but still never let your wrath be turned into sin by retaining it too long, let not the sun set upon your irritation, let the close of every day see you at peace with all men, else you will give the devil an opportunity to mislead you. Let the robber rob no more, but rather let him labour, working that which is good with his hands which he once used for evil; and let him do so that he may help him that is in want. Let no corrupt language proceed from your mouth, but such as is good and edifying as regards the immediate occasion on which you are speaking², that it may impart a blessing to the hearers. And do not, by neglecting these precepts, which are absolutely binding on all who claim a share in Christian privileges, grieve the Holy Spirit of God in whom you were sealed, and reserved for the day when Christ's

SERMON
LI.

25.

(Zech. viii.
16.)

16.

(Ps. iv. 4.)

27.

28.

29.

30.

¹ The quotation is made from the LXX., but our translators have written in the Psalm, *stand in awe*. The verb ἰστῆναι may mean either *to stand in awe* (Is. xxxii. 10, 11) or *to be angry* (Is. xxviii. 21), but the context of Ps. iv. (especially v. 2) seems to shew that our translation is right and the LXX. wrong.

² πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας, not *for the use of edifying*, but *for the edification of the need*, which is sufficiently explained in the text.

SERMON *redemption shall be complete in glory. Let all bitterness of disposition, and sudden passion, and malicious anger, and clamorous invective, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all uncharitable*
LI.
 31. *feeling, and become towards one another kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God manifested in Christ forgave you.*

Its principal lessons.

3. This then is the code of Christian morals which St Paul enjoins on all who are baptized into Christ's name and sealed with His Spirit. And we may by God's blessing be enabled to apply to ourselves some of the lessons which I suggested to you at the beginning of this sermon, if we (i) glance historically at the entire novelty of this teaching, and its absolute contrast to the principles which it superseded; (ii) consider practically its bearing on our own lives; and (iii) pay special heed to the danger of neglecting it.

Its novelty.

i. Contemplating this passage from a Christian point of view, and accustomed to hear these and similar precepts from our childhood, we are apt to regard it with a contented indifference, or at best with a passing wish that we could obey it more accurately. But that we may appreciate better its divine excellence, let us consider how strangely it must have sounded in the ears of men dwelling in the great heathen city where it was first proclaimed. We learn from the Acts of the Apostles and other sources, that Ephesus was mainly remarkable for two things, commercial prosperity, and the enthusi-

astic devotion of its inhabitants to the worship of Diana. In other words, the Ephesians were chiefly known for luxury and superstition. We learn from ancient writers that the rites with which they honoured their goddess Artemis or Diana were, like other forms of idolatry, polluted by cruelty and sensual sin¹. That her worship involved the most bigoted fanaticism, united as fanaticism often is with selfish greed, veiled under a specious pretext of religious duty, is plain from the uproar which arose when Christian preaching seemed likely to diminish the sale of the silver shrines, or models of the great temple, which devotees carried away as memorials of their pilgrimage. And that the same worship found another source of profit in the superstitious fears of the people, is obvious from the magical arts of the exorcists who thronged the city, and the Ephesian letters as they were called, graven on the crown, girdle, and feet of the great idol, which were used as amulets against evil spirits². How marvellous must the command to put away *anger and clamour and evil speaking* have seemed to those who had heard or shared the shrieks of that frantic mob, which *rushed full of wrath into the theatre, crying out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!* How novel must the invitation to truth and uprightness have been to the vagabond Jews and sorcerers who used curious arts,

SERMON
LI.

Acts xix.
23 ff.

Acts xix.
13.

Acts xix.
28, 29.

¹ See Dr Howson's article on "Diana" in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

² Conybeare and Howson, II. 13.

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Acts xix.
19.

and had amassed such wealth from their imposture, that even the comparatively small number who repented of their evil deeds gave up magical books of no less value than 50,000 pieces of silver. How wholly unprepared were those who sought by costly sacrifices and impure rites to propitiate the wrath of that mysterious goddess *whom all Asia and the world worshipped*, to hear of the new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness, of the Holy Spirit who sealed till the day of redemption all who sought His grace, and of the forgiveness offered for Christ's sake freely to all mankind. We must place ourselves in thought among the crowds who were struggling and wrangling and cheating each other, and enslaved by superstitious ignorance in that profligate city, in order to appreciate the glory of the doctrine which St Paul preached among them, and of the life in which he invited them to be partakers.

Acts xix.
27.

Its continued bearing on human life.

ii. But while we turn our thoughts back in thankful wonder to the first utterance of these words, and to the men to whom they were originally spoken, we must not forget that they are also address by God's Spirit to Christians of every generation, and therefore to ourselves. And surely, if they contrasted strangely with the state of the Ephesians then, they are scarcely less necessary, although more familiar now. For we too are living in the toleration or practice of evils against which they declare irreconcilable war. We also, with our selfishness and ambition, our rivalry of classes and interests, our bitter

SERMON
LI.

feelings and bitter words against those who clash with our prejudices or our schemes of worldly advantage, most urgently require to be reminded that we should be *kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us*. Nor is it less necessary for every individual among us to take heed to them, and apply them to himself by honest self-scrutiny, than for all to do our utmost to reform our common social life according to their teaching. Every one should compare his own heart and practice with each separate particular of the passage, and with the whole picture of the Christian life which the passage presents. For in our self-complacent estimate of ourselves we are apt to regard our freedom from one vice as a compensation for indulging in another, or to mistake a natural disinclination to some particular sin for the Christian principle which makes us hate all sin because it is sin, and therefore displeasing to Christ, and unworthy of those who are called by His Name. A man reads such a passage as this, and rejoices that in some points at least he is not obnoxious to its censures. But let him remember that he is not called upon to practise one or two virtues, but to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, to be clothed with His perfect holiness, even as it is said that if a man *keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*. So if any one congratulates himself that he regards a lie as base and dishonourable, let him remember how often he has yielded to evil

Rom. xiii.

14

James ii.

10.

SERMON
LI.

temper, and allowed, not one, but many suns, to *go down upon his wrath*. If another trusts that he is not hasty and impetuous in his anger, is he not unforgiving? How few of us, even of those who are strictly upright, and watchful against anger or malice, take sufficient heed that *no corrupt communication should proceed out of our mouth*. If we do not indulge in profane or impure words, at least we too often utter words unworthy of our Christian principles, saying what will please those around us, or acquiescing in a low standard of duty, or passing unkind judgments on our brethren, or talking for no object but vainglorious display. So again, even with reference to those particulars in which we do obey St Paul's precepts in their literal acceptation, let us consider whether the spirit in which we observe them agrees with that in which he inculcates them. For instance, when we are thankful that our conscience is unstained by falsehood, have we noticed the reason on which the Apostle grounds this duty of sincerity, and the new element which that reason introduces into our practice? *Speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another*. He does not commend that bluff, rugged honesty and plainness of speech on which persons who have a character for sincerity often pride themselves, and which shews itself in an offensive disregard for the feelings of others, but he tells us that into the Christian idea of truthfulness, as into every Christian grace, love enters as a component part, and

that because we love our brethren therefore we must not deceive them, since mutual trust is the foundation of love. So again, let him who is of a placid temper, and not easily provoked, be careful that his mildness is a matter of principle, and not an indolent indifference, which cannot be roused to just and lawful anger, even by the sight of wickedness. It may probably seem inconceivable that we should be literally guilty of robbery, yet even here it is well for us to observe that the Christian grace contrasted with this crime is readiness *to give to him that needeth*. Hence, though it may seem morally impossible that persons in our circumstances should rob or defraud each other, it is not impossible, but most probable, that we often rob God and the poor by ministering to luxury or covetousness with that substance which is designed for worthier objects. In every case we must look at our principles, our will, our deliberate convictions, not merely at the outward actions which result from the natural dispositions with which we were born.

iii. And therefore we must take special heed to the warning yet encouraging words of the text, which *Danger of neglecting it.* sums up the general teaching of the passage. *Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed till the day of redemption.* Do we then connect our daily walk and conduct, our principles, our words, and tempers, our ordinary mutual intercourse, with the thought that we have been marked as God's own, purchased by Christ's blood, and stamped by the

SERMON
LI.

LII. *LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL
EXCITEMENTS.*

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EPH. V. 18.

*Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the
Spirit.*

SERMON
LII.
*Difficulty
in the text.*

I SUPPOSE that there are few of us who have not been struck with something like a feeling of incongruity on hearing the words of the text. Strange indeed, we may have thought, that the Apostle should thus couple together the most degraded state into which human nature can sink, with its loftiest and purest happiness. A contrast, we say, loses much of its force when the things compared are absolutely opposed and contradictory. To give point to an antithesis there must be some resemblance between the thoughts which we bring together. Nay, we may have gone further, and felt tempted to regard the comparison as almost irreverent. It may seem to us that the divine gift of the Spirit, sent to bring men into communion with the God of purity and holiness, should scarcely be mentioned in the same breath

with the vice of intoxication, degrading him below the level of the beasts of the field. SERMON
LII.

But although it is certain that the opposition between drunkenness and spiritual life is as entire and direct as can be conceived, yet on considering the verse before us we shall find (as of course we cannot seriously doubt when we remember who is its author) that the antithesis in the text is very true and instructive. That it was deliberately intended is clear, for the passage to which it belongs, and which is chosen for to-day's epistle, is full of such contrasts. The folly of walking carelessly is contrasted with the wisdom of redeeming the time: opportunities secured for good with evil days misused: the unwise with those who understand the Lord's will: and at last the fulness of wine with the fulness of the Spirit. We shall probably see this more clearly, and also understand better the important position which the text occupies, when I have briefly paraphrased and explained the whole passage.

2. *Take heed, says the Apostle, that ye walk strictly, according to a well-chosen rule of life, not as unwise, but as wise, purchasing for yourselves, like merchants carefully looking out for advantageous bargains, the opportunity of doing good whenever it occurs, because the days in which you live are evil. Wherefore beware of falling into any folly, but take pains to understand what is the will of the Lord. And to take an obvious instance of the contrast between folly and*

Paraphrase of the epistle.
Eph. v. 15.
16.

17.

18.

SERMON the knowledge of that will, be not drunk with wine, for
LII. this abuse of God's gift is nothing less than reckless

19. *profligacy, but be filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking among yourselves in psalms, (songs accompanied by music), and hymns, (songs of praise), and Christian poetry of every kind; singing too with silent and spiritual melodies in your hearts to the Lord Jesus*
20. *Christ¹; giving thanks always for all things, (not blessings only, but all God's dispensations, even chastisements and sufferings), to God our Father in the Name*
21. *of our Lord Jesus Christ; and finally being subject one to another, not from moral cowardice and want of self-respect, but in the fear of Christ², that is, helping and serving the members, from love and reverence to the Head.*

Variations
from the
authorized
version.

3. Before I go on to apply the text, or rather the whole passage in connection with the text, to our instruction in righteousness, I must call your attention to two variations which I have made from the authorized version of this passage.

Alteration
in ver. 16.

a. The words *redeeming the time* express but inadequately the meaning of the original. For *time* we should substitute *opportunity*, and *redeeming* must be understood in the sense of *purchasing*. We are told to buy up for ourselves and diligently employ every occasion of serving God or our brethren: for the days are evil, full of misery and sin, and there-

¹ The Lord (Κύριος) in St Paul, is always the Lord Jesus Christ, never the Father.

² Christ, and not God, is the true reading here.

fore we must secure out of them, by a wise use of circumstances, every fitting opportunity for our own growth in holiness and for active benevolence. It is interesting to notice how forcibly St Paul has impressed this duty upon us by example as well as by precept: how carefully he bought up every opportunity of doing good: how at the very time when he wrote this Epistle to the Ephesians, his own lot was cast in the evil days of imprisonment and persecution, and yet how he persevered in *teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ* to all around him, and at the same time in writing letters of Christian exhortation to those far from him, turning as has been well said, "his prison into a pulpit from which he preached to the world¹."

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LII.

b. For the words *speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*, it is quite necessary to substitute *among yourselves*, that is, in your meetings for worship; just as in the passage corresponding to this in the Epistle to the Colossians we find the same direction somewhat expanded, *teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*. Thus in both places this precept, combined with the clause which follows, reminds us to unite the inward with the outward worship of God. The Ephesians are told to *speak to one another in sacred songs, singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord*, and the Colossians are in like manner bidden to *teach and admonish one*

Acts xxviii.
31.

Alteration
in ver. 19.

Col. iii. 16.

¹ Dr C. Wordsworth.

SERMON *another from the same sources of mutual encourage-*
LII. *ment, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord.* Thus while the Apostle in each passage sanctions the practice of congregational singing, which became so marked a characteristic of the early Christians that a Roman governor in reporting on their habits to the emperor mentions that they were accustomed to "sing in alternate verses a hymn to Christ¹," he also warns us on both occasions that this public singing or worship is only accepted when it expresses the devout feelings of hearts attuned to heavenly harmony, and filled with the grateful love of God.

Excitement. 4. These explanations, though they may seem to have led us astray from our text, are really a fitting introduction to the application which we shall make of it. For the text is the central thought and key-note of the whole epistle. In the opening verses we are bidden to be careful in our daily conduct and social life, discerning on every occasion what is pleasing
 Phil. ii. 15. to God, and *in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation*, choosing the right opportunity for accomplishing what is good. And to this end we are to avoid the drunkenness of wine, or generally of any mere outward excitement, and to seek rather to be quickened with the holy excitement of the Spirit. And then to this injunction of the text four clauses are added by which this excitement of the Spirit is defined and expanded into particulars. The first of

¹ Pliny to Trajan (*Epist.* x. 97), "*carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem.*"

these is, *speaking to one another with spiritual songs*; the second, *singing with your hearts*; the third, *giving thanks for all God's appointments*; the fourth, *submitting to one another in the fear of Christ*. The fulness of Christ's Spirit, which is the true Christian excitement, is here represented as shewing itself in three special duties towards God, His public worship, secret communion with Him, and pious gratitude for His fatherly care; and in one comprehensive moral duty towards men, the ready devotion of our own will to the furtherance of our brethren's good. We shall now be better able to explain and to justify the antithesis which embarrassed us in the text. For we see that the two things compared in it are two different species of excitement, and therefore that there is a resemblance between them in spite of their contrariety. We may remember how this resemblance struck the spectators of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit, when they mistook the new powers and higher life conferred on the disciples for the fulness of *new wine*. Now excitement of some kind is a necessity of human nature, for we are born to feel as well as to think. It was not meant that we should be guided merely by the rules of the understanding, or should be frozen by monotony, and live a life of endless routine. Such an existence has been displayed in its perfection by the contemplative life of Hindu and Buddhist sages, and is seen to degrade a man to a condition little better than that of a plant. We have an irrepressible desire to escape from the

SERMON
LII.

Acts ii. 13.

SERMON
LII.

unvaried bondage of mechanical occupations, and to divert our thoughts sometimes from their habitual channel. It is a consequence of the laws which God has imprest upon our being, that our pulses require sometimes to be stirred by a quicker motion, and a more vivid consciousness of activity. And hence men seek enjoyment, not merely from such outward stimulants as that mentioned in the text, but from the whirl of fashionable life in Europe, or the ceaseless round of amusement which prevails even here in India, not much perhaps among the overworked community of this great capital, but certainly, and often I fear very culpably, at those hill stations to which we resort in search of health or leisure; or again, from the extreme alternations of success and failure which constitute the pleasure of the gamester's life, causing a present excitement so strong and lively as utterly to shut out the prospect of the miserable future. Now for the legitimate gratification of this love of excitement God Himself has made provision. The want which He has implanted in us as the Author of Nature, He recognizes as the Author of Revelation. Religion itself depends to a great extent on feeling, its root is in the affections, it springs from gratitude to God, and the desire of spiritual communion with the Author of all good. So that while the text warns us against a false and sensual excitement, it turns our thoughts to that which is true and lawful and divine, for drunkenness is here merely taken as the type of all such excitements as stimulate the senses and

minister to the passions of the natural man. Let us then without any further reference to the particular example chosen in the text, consider (i) these outward excitements in general; and (ii) that spiritual quickening of our inner life which is designed to calm and satisfy the want which the others only inflame.

SERMON
LII.

i. There is no doubt that such a subject is most suitable to the age in which we live. The increased supply of the means of excitement is a mark of our generation. The whole state of society is more exciting than it was in our fathers' days: the fresh facilities for travelling, the growth of luxury, the spread of commerce, the ceaseless competition for worldly success and honour from boyhood to old age, the character of popular literature, the multiplication of works of fiction, all tend to excite, to vary, to stimulate human life. Some of these excitements are in themselves lawful, some unlawful, many, if unavoidable, are at least very perilous. But all resemble each other, and differ from religious excitement in three points; that they begin from without, and act upon the senses; that even those of them which are lawful or necessary require to be moderated and controlled, or else will minister to evil; and that they generally have not a soothing but rather an unsatisfactory tendency, producing only a craving for fresh indulgences; whereas that fulness of the Spirit, to which the Apostle opposes them, begins from within and acts on the heart; cannot be too earnestly sought or too thankfully enjoyed; and not

*Outward
and unlaw-
ful excite-
ment.*

SERMON
LII.

only stimulates, but also pacifies our feelings and affections. Some of these outward excitements are so fraught with peril that they must be avoided altogether. In allowing ourselves the moderate use of others, we must be guided by such precepts as we have just heard, *we must walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, understanding what the will of the Lord is*, and we must anxiously desire to secure every opportunity for doing good in days, which, if not more evil than other days, are, like all the days of Christ's absence, full of wickedness and sorrow. We do not doubt that God has intended us to derive pleasure from the eye and from the ear; from the fancy, the imagination, and all the gifts and powers which He has entrusted to our keeping. But we shall not forget that all these may be so abused, or indulged to such an excess, as to realize Isaiah's warning that

men may be *drunken, yet not with wine*. We may be seduced by their influence to waste time and opportunities, which ought to be used for the discharge of duty. An unreal and exciting literature is apt to unfit us for the exercise of calm judgement, to give us so false a view of human nature and society that we lose sight of the Christian standard of right and wrong, to conceal the grossness of vice and selfishness by a glittering veil of romantic sentiment, or by a sarcastic depreciation of lofty excellence. Whenever we derive even lawful excitement from any outward source, we have need to walk warily, to remember our baptismal calling, to seek earnestly for the know-

Is. xxix. 9.
li. 21.

ledge of God's will, which can alone enlighten our SERMON
 conscience, and regulate the exercise of our Christian LII.
 liberty.

ii. And therefore, it is also most necessary for us Spiritual
 to remember always that God has provided one sure and lawful
 and unfailing means of supplying this want of our excitement.
 nature, that there is one excitement which is perfectly
 safe, perfectly wholesome, and in which there is no
 possibility of excess. This excitement is ours when we
 are *filled with the Spirit*, and hold communion through
 Jesus Christ with our Father who is in heaven.
 When I say this, I can imagine some one thinking
 to himself that even this excitement like every other
 may be abused to evil, since the miserable results of
 religious fanaticism would seem to shew that there is
 absolutely no exception to the general law. But
 such a thought would be mistaken. The Spirit of
 God is *the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the* Is. xi. 2.
Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge
and of the fear of the Lord. God has given us *the* 2 Tim. i. 7.
Spirit of power and love and of a sound mind. It is
 true that many follies and crimes and even bar-
 barities have been committed in the name of Chris-
 tianity, but only by those who had first forgotten its
 most essential principles. It is true that a prejudice
 has been roused in many minds against the greatest
 of public blessings, the revival of religion in a cold
 and self-seeking generation, by the excesses which
 have often degraded well-meant attempts to realize
 it. But all these kinds of frenzy, temporary mad-

SERMON
LII. ness, or bodily convulsions, or extravagances of other kinds, plainly belong to the class of excitements which the prophet describes as a drunkenness *though not with wine*, because they operate from without and not from within, on the senses or the passions, and not on the spirit. They are not religion, but a miserable caricature and perversion of it. *The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality and without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.* Therefore, brethren, if any one is sometimes wearied with the monotonous details of a laborious profession, and anxious for something to break the uniformity of life and quicken its sluggish current, let him see if he cannot find it in the thought of God, in the calm and soothing remembrance of Christ's life on earth, and in the blissful hope of seeing Him hereafter face to face in heaven. We are not debarred from the help of other lawful excitements, in their due measure and degree, but it is this which should control them all, and save us from the danger of turning enjoyment into sin. Seek then such excitement as this, brethren, according to the teaching of to-day's epistle. Remember its fourfold division into public worship, private prayer, a pervading sense of devout thankfulness to Him who died for you, and an unselfish readiness to help in all efforts wisely made to diminish this world's misery. Communion with God in His house, in our own

JAMES iii.
17, 18.

secret chambers, and in the sanctuary of the heart even when we are surrounded with this world's cares, together with Christian usefulness and an abundance of good works, are the divine means of excitement, the fulness of the Spirit who rouses without intoxicating, and calms while He invigorates the weary and unsatisfied soul.

SERMON
LII.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, CALCUTTA,
1861.

LIII. THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EPH. VI. 13.

Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

SERMON
LIII.

*Metaphors
derived
from war-
fare.*

THE comparison of the Christian's course to warfare is frequent in Scripture, and seems to be a special instance of a more general and obvious comparison. Such phrases as the "battle" or the "struggle of life" are natural and common even without any distinctly religious reference. The whole history of the Israelites, their bondage in Egypt, their escape from captivity, and triumphant wars against the wicked Canaanites, furnish us partly with examples, and partly with types of the contest which we must carry on against the enemies of our souls. St Paul delights to represent every Christian as fighting a battle under Christ as his Captain. *The weapons of our warfare*, he tells us in one place, *are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*. In another he says, *let us, who are of the day,*

² Cor. x. 4.

¹ Thess. v.

8.

be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. But he has nowhere worked out this comparison so carefully and elaborately as in the passage chosen for to-day's epistle, which seems to have been suggested to him by the language of Isaiah, who speaks of the Lord as putting on *righteousness for a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon His head*. But St Paul carries out the thought here into far more minute details, likening every portion of a Roman soldier's armour, whether offensive or defensive, to some Christian principle or virtue. We cannot doubt that this imagery was suggested to him by the circumstances in which he wrote his epistle to the Ephesians. He was then a prisoner at Rome, under the guard of a soldier to whom he was actually chained, and he must have constantly witnessed the parades and reviews and daily discipline of the emperor's Prætorian guard, the picked soldiers of the Roman army, since we know that the Gospel was preached, apparently by himself, certainly by his companions, in their barracks¹. Let us then briefly run through the passage to which our thoughts are this morning directed. I will read it to you, occasionally altering the words in order to make the sense more clear, and sometimes paraphrasing or expanding it.

SERMON
LIII.

Is. lix. 17.

Actsxxviii.
16, 20.

¹ ἐν δὲ τῇ πραιτωρίᾳ, in Phil. i. 13, may include the whole quarters of the Prætorian guard, of which part was attached to Nero's palace (Conybeare and Howson, Vol. II. p. 510, ed. 2) and part outside the city. (Ellicott *in loc.*)

SERMON
LIII.

Para-
phrase of
the epistle.
Eph. vi. 10.

2. My brethren, says the Apostle, *be strengthened with the power received in communion with Christ, and with the strength to be found in His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able, like*
 11. *soldiers, to maintain your ground against the strata-*
 12. *gems of the devil. For the wrestling in which we are engaged is not against mere feeble men, but it is against powerful enemies of our souls, the lusts which war in our members, and now exercise a world-wide sway over the moral darkness with which we are naturally encompassed, against spiritual hosts of evil fighting against us in heavenly things.*

I pause for a moment to ask you to look carefully at this difficult 12th verse. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* By *flesh and blood* the Apostle means men like ourselves; just as our Lord tells St Peter that *flesh and blood* had not revealed to him his faith in the Son of God, and as St Paul says that he did not confer with *flesh and blood* on the subject of his commission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. And one of the most learned among ancient expositors interprets the formidable enemies, thus contrasted with *flesh and blood*, or feeble men, to be "the spiritual powers of innate passions, which work by means of our natural desires¹." Moreover, in all the old English versions of the Bible, the word translated *high places* is interpreted to mean

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. p. 839.

*heavenly things*¹, that is, matters pertaining to God's kingdom, so that the teaching of the whole passage is that the Christian warrior does not fight, like the earthly soldier, against visible antagonists, but against the sin which reigns in his heart, and the spiritual powers of evil which tyrannize over his will, quench his heavenly aspirations, and would fain hurry him to eternal ruin.

Wherefore, St Paul continues, since our foes are so 13.
mighty, I once more exhort you to take up the whole
armour of God, that ye may be able to fight manfully
whenever the day of difficulty and temptation comes
upon you, and having accomplished all things well,
having bravely used all God's weapons, to stand firm
at your post. Stand bravely then in the fight, having 14.
girt your loins about with truthfulness, and having put
on righteousness as your breastplate, and having shod 15.
your feet with the ready firmness arising from that
Gospel whose message is peace, just as a soldier
puts on his sandals that he may be ready for the bat-
tle on a sure foundation, and having taken up, as a 16.
general covering and protection, faith as your shield,
against which all the fiery missile weapons of the
evil one will fall harmlessly and be extinguished.
Receive also the hope of salvation as your helmet, and 17.
the sword forged for you by the Holy Spirit, which is
the Word or Gospel of God. Stand also in the battle

¹ Wiclif, Coverdale, Cranmer, Tyndale. The same ethical rather than local reference (*heavenly things*, and not *high* or *heavenly places*) is given by Chrysostom.

SERMON
LIII. strengthened by communion with God, with all prayer

18. and supplication, praying in every season of difficulty in dependence on the help of His Spirit, and being watchful with all perseverance and supplication, not
19. for yourselves alone, but for all your Christian brethren, and especially for me, your absent friend and pastor, that I may be helped to utter my thoughts boldly, whenever I open my mouth to preach, to make known the
20. revelation of God contained in the Gospel, in behalf of which I am an ambassador of Christ, though not like other ambassadors free and inviolate¹, but a prisoner bound by a chain, that in preaching it I may speak freely, as it is my duty to speak.

The Christian's weapons.

3. Such, brethren, is the language, in which the apostle compares the struggles of a Christian against the enemies of his soul to the warfare of a soldier against the enemies of his country. You see that the description is very minute, and therefore very suggestive. For as all the most important parts of a Roman soldier's armour are specified in this passage, we shall learn, from considering them one by one, what are the most effective weapons in the Christian's arsenal. The whole armour of him who was engaged in this world's battles, as St Paul used to see it worn by his guards, or by the troops in the stationary camp or barracks at Rome, consisted of the *girdle* which surrounded the soldier's loins, and kept together all the separate pieces of the panoply; the *breastplate* with which he faced the foe; the *military*

¹ Wetstein.

boot or sandal with which his leg was bound up for activity of movement and firmness of resistance; the immense *shield*¹, like a door, adapted to the shape of the human body, encircling and covering it so as to complete its defence; the *helmet* which protected his head; and the *sword* with which he came to close quarters with the advancing foe. And now what are the spiritual truths, the Christian graces typified by these outward weapons? Let us look more closely into the passage, that we may learn how to equip ourselves for the warfare against sin.

SERMON
LIII.

i. The Christian's girdle is *truth*. As the soldier's belt surrounded his body, and kept together all the other parts of his equipment, so is truthfulness, that is reality of Christian conviction, and honesty in purpose and profession, the band of the spiritual soldier's preparation, without which the other portions of his armour cannot be kept in their places, and brought out for use as they are required. To be sincere and earnest in our purpose, really anxious for religious improvement, to have the heart engaged in the work, and the will turned honestly to the love of Christ, is the great security for consistent perseverance in the fight against His enemies.

ii. The breastplate is *righteousness*. The most prominent and conspicuous portion of the Roman armour was the breastplate, and so the most prominent and conspicuous of Christian graces is that

¹ *θυρεός*.

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purity and uprightness of character, that integrity in all our dealings with others, by which we teach men to trust the principles of Christianity, and shew that its influence is such as to produce results directly tending to the happiness and security of all who have any connection or business with a true disciple of Jesus Christ. This righteousness springs from the renewal of the heart by the Holy Spirit; it is the inwrought righteousness of our Saviour, that Christian holiness and pure morality, of which the Apostle speaks, when he exhorts the Romans to *yield their members as instruments of righteousness unto God*.

Rom. vi.
13.

*Firmness
and readi-
ness to resist
temptation.*

iii. The feet are *shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*. By *preparation* seems here meant a foundation or firm footing. The word is the same as that used in a passage of the book of Ezra, where we are told of *offerings to set up the house of God in its place, or on its foundation*, and in the 89th Psalm, where we read, in the 14th verse, that *justice and judgement are the habitation of God's throne*, in which passage the margin of the English Bible properly substitutes for *habitation* the word *establishment*, or *foundation*. The Gospel of peace then, the calmness of mind, and sure conviction of God's love resulting from the belief in the Gospel, is the foundation, or pair of sandals, with which the feet of the Christian soldier are shod that he may be prepared by a firm footing for all the dangers and difficulties of the combat, and never be tripped up or moved from his

Ezra ii. 68.
Ps. lxxxix.
14.
ἐτοιμασία
is used by
the LXX.
to repre-
sent the
original
מָבֵן.

place¹, either by the subtle machinations or open attacks of his spiritual enemies. Resting on that strong support, he will be ready to meet and to resist all their efforts for his destruction. SERMON
LIII.

iv. But chiefly, as the soldier's whole body was *Faith*. covered by the vast Roman shield, so all the Christian life is pervaded and defended by *faith*. Of course by this faith we mean Christian faith. For though even in the days before Christ came, a faith in duty or in some high and unselfish principle was the source of every truly heroic action, and though nothing really good and great has ever been accomplished except under the influence of things unseen Heb. xi. 1. and hoped for, yet we need not dwell on inferior objects of faith, when we have been brought to the knowledge of that faith which animates the Christian. Now the reason why faith is a complete covering and protection to us is that it carries us out of ourselves, and bids us rest our hopes and affections on the Lord Jesus Christ. It teaches us to find in His life an unerring pattern for our conduct, a direct manifestation of God. It saves us from the self-distrust and discouragement which the thought of our sinfulness might well produce within us, for it assures us that Christ by His death has reconciled us to God, and by His Resurrection has opened the way to the kingdom which cannot be moved. And we learn from it further that though the evil thoughts which

¹ *Pedes militis Christiani firmantur Evangelio, ne loco moveatur, (Bengel).*

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LIII.

Satan darts into our weak and erring souls as as fiery and destructive as the cane arrows, and other missiles tipt with blazing pitch and tow, which, in the rude warfare before the invention of gunpowder, were hurled against a beleaguered camp or fortress, yet the Lord Jesus, our living Saviour, supplies us with strength according to our need, and will so shield us with His everlasting arm, that the weapons of the Evil one will fall powerless on the heart protected by His love.

Hope.

v. We might have expected the Apostle here to close his comparison, since faith in Christ is the final security for the permanence of all good and holy principles, and preserves truthfulness, righteousness, and readiness to follow God from those dangers and perversions to which they are exposed when they are unsupported by a broad and immoveable foundation. Yet he still carries it on by some further details. As the soldier's head, the only part unprotected by the shield, is guarded by the helmet, so is the Christian's faith to be completed, his wavering mind established, and his faint heart encouraged by *salvation*, that is, as the phrase must be explained

¹ Thess. v. 8. from a parallel passage already quoted, by *the hope of*

salvation, by personally appropriating Christ's salvation to himself, by believing that Christ died, not only for sins generally, but for his own sins, and by the humble hope of one day personally shewing His glory. "It is an easy matter," says Luther, "to magnify and amplify the benefit of Christ, and

say that Christ was given for sins.....but when it cometh [to St Paul's words that] He *gave Himself for our sins*, there our weak nature and reason starteth back, and dare not come nigh to God, nor promise to herself that so great a treasure shall be freely given her¹."

SERMON
LIII.
Gal. i. 4.

vi. Moreover, the Apostle tells us that we must not only defend ourselves against the attacks of our enemies, but go forward and resist them. Thus the sword of offensive warfare is compared to the *Word of God*, with which our Lord Himself, when He was tempted in the wilderness, drove away the assaults of the great adversary. For by the practical knowledge of God's will revealed to us in Scripture, and especially in the life and teaching of Him who was the living Word of God, we must be ready to resist temptation. Make the Bible then, brethren, the guide of your lives; and whenever an evil thought, or a wicked lust, or an unblest temper threatens you, drive it away as with a sword, before it can lay hold of you, by recollecting the example, or the precepts, or the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ, who lived on earth as your pattern, and shewed you in what strength temptation must be overcome.

The word
of God.

Matt. iv.
4, 7, 10.

vii. Here ends the actual comparison between the soldier's warfare, and the Christian's resistance to evil. But the Apostle, before he quits the subject, gives one more exhortation to those who are thus

Prayer.

¹ Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, p. 105.

SERMON
LIII.

equipped with the whole armour of God. You must stand firm in the fight, he says, not only girdled with truthfulness, with integrity on the breast, and with the Gospel of peace as your sure foundation or resting place, not only shielded with faith, covered with Christ's salvation, and armed with the word of God, but also *praying always with all prayer and supplication* for yourselves and others. Early Christian writers saw in this precept materials for extending yet further the Apostle's comparison. As all human life was a campaign against sin, in which Christ, the Captain of our salvation, leads His followers to victory, so the prayers of Christians were the watches or sentries by which the camp of the Lord was guarded¹, and all unlooked-for assaults of the enemy repelled. And so too in the public profession of the Christian faith which we make in repeating the Creed, they saw the watchword or symbol of their union into God's army; and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were regarded as the military oaths of loyalty and obedience by which they were originally devoted to His service, and by which this pledge was continually renewed². And so too, brethren, we should regard all these outward helps, as real means of grace, that is, means of living nearer to Christ and resisting all

¹ Sub armis orationis signum nostri Imperatoris custodiamus. Tertull. *de Orat.* § 24.

² See Neander, *Denkwürdigkeiten* (Memorials of the Christian Life) Part I. ch. iv.

inclinations which keep us from Him. Above all, believe heartily in the power, and live in the practice of prayer. Pray for yourselves, that God may bless and strengthen you; and as in an earthly army a commander greatly prizes fellowship and mutual goodwill among his men, so do you also pray for one another, as indeed you must do if you believe that you have a common cause, a common Leader, a common hope, and therefore should be united by a common band of brotherly love.

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LIII.

4. Lastly, let me draw one lesson from the whole passage. What is the special reason for which this comparison seems a natural one? In what particulars is a Christian's life like a soldier's life? In some respects not at all; for Christianity is the Gospel or glad tidings of peace, while the profession of a soldier originates from the existence of violence, hatred, and war. But just as our Lord compares an earnest Christian to an unjust steward, and God Himself to an unjust judge, because in certain special points there is a resemblance between them, so though a soldier may often be a very wicked man, yet his conduct in some particulars may yet be a pattern of the Christian course. He sets us an example by the spirit in which he performs his duties, by his heroic devotion to an unselfish end, by his readiness to meet privation, suffering, danger, and death, by his strict obedience to his captain, by his self-control, his courage, his enthusiasm, his perseverance. Such, as we all know, are the qualities

Resemblances and differences between the life of a soldier and of a Christian.

Luke xvi.
i ff.
xviii. i ff.

SERMON
LIII. by which English soldiers have encountered hardship and danger, and covered themselves and their

1 Tim. vi. must all *fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on*
12. *eternal life.* Let each only bring to the struggle

Ps. xviii. *gird us with strength unto the battle, and subdue under*
39. *us those that rise up against us,* adding to our own untempered armour the security of His prevailing intercession, and the comfort of His Holy Spirit.

LIV. KNOWLEDGE AND JUDGEMENT.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

PHIL. I. 9.

*And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more
in knowledge and in all judgement.*

Two Sundays ago the services of the Church turned our thoughts to the subject of excitement, and we were led to enquire into its nature and use, and to contrast the dangers of an excitement proceeding from without and acting on the flesh, with the healthy influences of an excitement aroused within us by the Spirit of God. This last excitement, we saw, was fully recognized in Christianity, and provided by the Author of our Being to satisfy and regulate one of our natural wants and feelings. To-day's epistle brings before us another necessary grace of the Christian character, which is in some respects the opposite of religious excitement or enthusiasm. This grace is here divided into two portions, each essential to its completeness, *knowledge*, and *judgement*. By the for-

SERMON
LIV.
*Contrast
with a
former epi-
stle.*
Eph. v. 18.

SERMON LIV. mer expression is meant a general acquaintance with religious truth, whether theoretical or practical; by the latter the power of applying that knowledge to particular cases, the spiritual discernment, or (as it has been happily called) "moral tact," by which we perceive the true nature, good or bad, of all circumstances in which we may be placed, and discern the right and Christian mode of action under them. Taken together, the *knowledge* and *judgement* here mentioned by the Apostle make up the idea of Christian thoughtfulness or wisdom, by which love is guarded against the dangers of enthusiasm, of wasting itself on unworthy objects, or otherwise giving way to mere impulse or heedless excitement.

*Context of
this epistle.*

2. In the passage of which the text forms a part, St Paul is expressing his gratitude to God for the faith and zeal of his Philippian converts, for whom, almost in a greater degree than for any of his other disciples, he entertained the close and familiar affection of a friend. They seem to have been a grateful and warm-hearted people, and had given proofs that they were knit to him by a bond of more than ordinary love. For example, they alone of all Churches had on two occasions sent help to relieve his temporal wants. So now his heart yearns after them from his prison at Rome, and he pours forth, in language of fatherly affection, his thankful remembrance of their Christian fellowship, his confident hope of their growth in goodness, his heartfelt appreciation of their love.

Phil. iv. 16.

3. *I thank my God, he says, for my whole recollection of you, which is altogether joyful and unmixed with any disapprobation, always in every prayer of mine making my prayer for you all with thankful happiness, on account of the union of spirit which you have shewn in advancing the Gospel from the first day in which it was preached among you until the present time, for I am confident of this very thing, that God who began in you a good work will carry it on to perfection till the day when Jesus Christ is manifested in His second coming. And indeed I am justified in feeling this confidence about you all, because I have you in my heart, closely united to me by Christian affection, inasmuch as both in alleviating the sufferings of my imprisonment, and sympathizing with my exertions for the Gospel, whether in defending it against my adversaries or establishing it in the hearts of my disciples, you have proved yourselves to be partakers in the grace given to me by Christ. For God is my witness how I yearn for you all with the love of Jesus Christ Himself, who dwells in me by His Spirit, and sanctifies all my feelings. And this is my constant prayer, that your love for me, for one another, and for God, may increase more and more, being pervaded and enlightened with the knowledge of Christ's will, and every form of moral discrimination, so that you may be enabled to distinguish between things that are different, choosing the good and refusing the evil, and that thus you may be kept pure and free from stumbling in your Christian course, till the day of Christ's coming, being filled with*

SERMON
LIV.

Para-
phrase.
Phil. i. 3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

SERMON *the fruits of righteousness which are given us by Jesus*
LIV. *Christ, and lead to the glory and praise of God.*

Translation of ver.
10.

Cf. Rom.
ii. 18.

4. Though I have been obliged sometimes to expand the English version of this passage to make its meaning more clear, there is only one point of any importance in which I have ventured to differ from it. For the words *that ye may approve things that are excellent*, I substituted *that ye may distinguish between things that differ*, on this ground among others, that this accurate discrimination between right and wrong, this power of wisely choosing our line of conduct in moral difficulties, is the very gift apparently intended by the word *judgement* in our text, and which, together with a general *knowledge* of God's will, is desired by the Apostle for the Philippians, as a means of controlling and regulating the grace of love, which they already possess in ample measure.

Christianity appeals to the mind as well as the heart.

5. And yet I doubt whether in our ordinary estimate of Christian goodness, we remember that thoughtful wisdom forms an essential part of it. Sometimes indeed men seem to hold the very contrary doctrine, for they speak of such and such a person as truly religious, but at the same time regret that he is a weak-minded enthusiast; they tell us that he is an excellent Christian, but exceedingly deficient in judgement and common sense. Such language shews a very inadequate conception of Christianity, since the qualities thus spoken of as quite apart from it, are necessary constituents of its perfect idea. A

true Christian will no doubt often seem deficient in worldly prudence, not however from thoughtless negligence, but because he deliberately chooses to act on a higher principle, and has his conversation in heaven. But it is no part of the Christian character to be wanting in sound judgement, to be carried away by impulse, to be the mere sport even of good feelings, indulged without reflection. Doubtless a man who is really desirous to serve the Lord Jesus may sometimes shew in his conduct a lack of Christian thoughtfulness, without altogether forfeiting his Christian character, just as he may yield to selfishness, or passion, or any other grievous fault, and yet be kept within Christ's true fold by God's blessing on his penitence and prayer. But just as he must lose his connection with Christ if he continues the unresisting victim of anger, or self-seeking, or any other temptation, so it is quite certain that if we are really taught by Christ's Spirit, and pressing on to perfection, we must be tost about less and less by the winds of practical error, and unreasoning impulse; our love must *abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgement*, we must be filled with the Spirit of wisdom, as well as with the Spirit of zeal. If we believe that the Author of the Christian Revelation is in truth Allwise, it is monstrous to imagine that devoted piety can long be associated with folly, without suffering grievous loss, or that a weak-minded enthusiast can be truly religious. I think that, by God's blessing, some of these crude and unworthy notions, by

SERMON
LIV.

SERMON
LIV. which discredit is often brought on our faith, may be removed, if we consider some of the many signs that God's Revelation of Himself through Jesus Christ is address to the reason as well as to the feelings, to the head as well as to the heart. We can only do so very briefly and imperfectly, for in truth the subject is one of almost boundless extent.

Character-
istics of the
Bible. i. First then consider what ample employment for thought and reflection is given by the form in which God has made known His Revelation to us.

Heb. i. 1. From the *divers manners* in which it has pleased Him to speak to us through the Bible, and the *sundry times* in which its various parts have been written, we have this result, that as an object for intellectual interest and the exertion of our faculties, no book can compare with it. God's light has been gradually shining on mankind more and more brightly, from the early dawn of the earth's existence, to the perfect day of the Sun of Righteousness. The human agents employed to make known His will were chosen from every order of men and every phase of society: kings, poets, herdsmen, fishermen, high and low, learned and unlearned, for fifteen centuries. The contents of their writings are direct revelations of heavenly truth, divine precepts for our moral guidance, glances into the future of Christ's Kingdom, down to the setting of the great white throne; and the descent of the new Jerusalem. The forms in which they have written comprise almost every variety of literature; history, law, moral philosophy, allegory, poetry

SERMON
LIV.

of all kinds: the pictures of society presented to us are of every character, the court, the camp, the desert, the city, the prophets' school; and though these are no doubt mainly confined to one nation, yet we occasionally catch glimpses of the great secular empires of antiquity, and at last are carried out into the wide ocean of the Roman world. Thus while containing the simplest truth clothed in the simplest language, so that the least instructed may learn and profit by it, the Bible also affords ample scope for the attention of the antiquarian, the linguist, the critic, the philosopher, and with the various light now thrown upon it by their labours, is full of living interest to every intelligent reader. We cannot doubt that in clothing it with this peculiar form God intended that we should, as free moral agents and rational beings, study it, think about it, and understand it. By such thoughtful research, if carried on in a humble prayerful spirit, and with the constant recollection that the subject of our study is not the word of man, but the word of God, albeit handed down through human agency, we shall appreciate more thoroughly its divine wisdom, and apply it with sounder judgement to the good of our souls. If instead of merely hurrying through "a chapter," as the phrase is, for our morning task, or reading a few verses at our family prayers, or (as I fear is too often the case,) never listening to its blessed teaching except in church on Sundays, and then hearing it with wandering thoughts or hearts chilled by indifference

SERMON
LIV. and worldly cares, we would really study, with thoughtful reverence, and such human helps as we can procure, a whole Epistle, a Gospel, a historical narrative, a prophecy, we should surely, by God's blessing, begin to abound in spiritual knowledge, and in the judgement which distinguishes between things that differ.

*Omissions
in the Bible.*

ii. Another peculiarity of God's Revelation is that the omissions of the Bible afford scarcely less opportunity for thoughtful reflection than its contents. It lays down great principles rather than details of moral conduct, it often teaches us by giving examples which we must ourselves apply to particular circumstances, it has generated institutions and systems which have in their turn thrown back light upon its meaning, some of its truths must be expanded far beyond the mere letter of their statement, and some again are not intended to be always literally carried out. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord has obviously inculcated some principles, of which the spirit indeed must pervade the whole Christian life, but which cannot be exactly obeyed according to the actual words in which He has laid them down, since this would be an encouragement to fraud and violence. Again, there is no duty on which the Bible insists more constantly than a liberal and self-denying devotion of our substance to the wants of the poor. But how we may most wisely distribute it, and most effectually relieve want, what objects are most deserving of our

Matt. v.
39—42.

sympathy, when we shall act best by the agency of others, and when by our own personal exertions, all such questions are to be decided by thought, by experience, by the exercise of the understanding. Many points again, nearly all which concern liturgical and ceremonial worship, have been left for the decision of the Christian Church, and for adaptation to the wants, the customs, the history, the geographical position of various nations, as they are gradually gathered into the fold. From these and a hundred other instances we may see how necessary are wisdom and thoughtfulness to those who seek to fashion their lives according to the teaching and pattern of Jesus Christ.

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LIV.

iii. Again, turning from the study of the Bible to the other principal means by which we are intended to learn the will of God, what a lesson against thoughtlessness and unreasoning impulse is furnished by the great duty and privilege of prayer. For in the command to pray we are taught never to act hastily, but to collect our thoughts and soothe our feelings by entering into the pure and peaceful sanctuary of God, there to seek for knowledge and judgment from the Source of all wisdom. Consider, brethren, what calm thoughtfulness is implied in the very conception of prayer, what deep reverence should be felt in the presence of the heart-seeing and all-searching God, how carefully we should compare the tenour of our daily lives with the standard of Christ's Gospel. Surely prayer is especially ap-

Thoughtfulness in prayer.

SERMON
LIV. pointed to give us quiet opportunities for self-recollection and self-discipline, for the knowledge of our own weakness, for calling to mind the power and love of God, for the controul of our wishes and inclinations, lest we should mar the sincerity and prevent the acceptance of our prayers by the intrusion of any unhallowed and degrading desire. It is recorded of a good man who entered into his rest some years ago, that before kneeling down to pray he always carefully and thoughtfully prepared the substance of his prayers: a testimony certainly that prayer should spring from the mind and the judgement, no less than from the heart and feelings¹.

Watchful-
ness.

iv. And once more, remember how much of thoughtfulness and of sound judgement is implied in that other duty which is so often associated with prayer, the duty of watchfulness. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* Here again we see that love and zeal must be controlled by thoughtfulness. For we learn from this precept that not only at solemn times which we definitely assign to prayer, but in the unmarked course of our daily lives, our minds should be awake and active, anxiously watching against the temptations which surround us on every side, and raised above the passing concerns of the hour to the great Christian object of entire deliverance from the power of sin, and constant growth in the knowledge of Christ.

Matt. xxvi.
41.

¹ See *Life of Sir T. Fowell Buxton*, by his son.

v. I can only notice very briefly one other SERMON LIV. Rights of Conscience. proof that Christianity is essentially a religion of thought and reflection ; and that is the full recognition throughout the Bible of the claims of man's conscience, the duty of unreservedly obeying it, and therefore of constantly enlightening it. Remember how distinctly St Paul appeals to our natural reason as implanted in us by God, and as intended to be instructed by His Spirit, and then ultimately to convince us of the truth of the Gospel generally and of all its separate precepts. But for sin, he says, this light would have guided the Gentiles to God, and actually did serve as a restraining law. He constantly Rom. ii. 14. invokes its aid in support of his own injunctions. He desires *by manifestation of truth to commend himself* 2 Cor. iv. 2. *to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* So again, *I speak to wise men, judge ye what I say.* 1 Cor. x. 15. *Judge in yourselves, doth not nature itself teach you ?* 1 Cor. xi. And in so doing he does but follow the pattern of our 13, 14. Lord Himself. *Why even of yourselves judge ye not* Luke xii. *what is right ?* We are always address as reasonable 57. beings, deeply responsible no doubt for our use of our liberty, but still free to choose between good and evil, and bound to make our choice on grounds of rational conviction. We are taught that he who performs any action whatever, without a firm faith and conscientious conviction that he is doing right, is guilty of sin. If a man were even to transgress the outworn and unchristian prohibitions of particular kinds of food, before his conscience is enlightened to see

SERMON LIV. that these are done away in Christ, he would be wrong. *He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* The rule always is that we are to walk by the light which we have obtained, and earnestly to seek

Phil. iii. 15, and pray for more. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God will reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*

16. "We must conform our actions to the standard which we have in our minds for the time, but we are also to make this standard truly moral... We must labour to enlighten and instruct our conscience. This task can never be ended. So long as life and powers of thought remain to us, we may always be able to acquire a still clearer and higher view than we possess, of the supreme law of our being¹." So let us especially remember that the divine gift of the Bible was bestowed upon mankind, not to supersede, but to correct, to stimulate, and to guide, the gift (also divine) of reason and conscience.

Character
of our Lord.

6. And now, brethren, it only remains that I should complete this imperfect sketch of a great subject by reminding you of the thoughtful wisdom shewn in the human life of Him who is our unerring Pattern. Truly does the Apostle teach us that

1 Cor. i. 30. *Jesus Christ was made for us of God, not only righte-*

¹ Whewell, *Elements of Morality*, i. p. 231.

ousness, and sanctification, and redemption, but wisdom SERMON
 also. Remember how even in His earliest boyhood, LIV.
 He began to increase in wisdom. Remember what
 wisdom, as well as love and holiness, shines forth
 in all His teaching, in the short and pithy answers
 by which He displays His perfect knowledge of
 human nature, in the parables and practical instruc-
 tions which we chiefly find in the three first Gospels,
 and in the deep spiritual revelations of God's pur-
 poses and operations which are recorded for us in
 the fourth. Thus Christ is the *Power of God and* 1 Cor. i. 24.
the Wisdom of God, and we who are called by His
 Name, and quickened to a new life by His power,
 must in carrying on that life be taught and guided
 by His wisdom. Let us then seek it from Him,
 trusting to the assurance, that *if any lack wisdom*, James i. 5.
he must ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally,
and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.

LV. HEAVEN OUR HOME.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

PHIL. III. 20.

Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body.

SERMON
LV. WHEN our authorized version of the Bible was made, this word *conversation* did not bear its modern sense of talking, but meant "manner," or "tenour, of life." This is its uniform meaning in Scripture. *Be ye holy in all manner of conversation: be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in purity: let your conversation be without covetousness: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation:* in these and many other places it obviously expresses a man's habitual conduct. But the original word translated *conversation* in the text is not the same as either of the words so translated in these passages which I have just quoted, and perhaps *conversation* or *tenour of life* is hardly adequate to do justice to its peculiar force and associations. For its proper meaning is *citizenship*, and

fearing of the word conversation in this passage.
Pet. i. 15.
ναστροφή.
Tim. iv.
2. ἀναστρ.
Ieb. xiii.
τρός.
Ieb. xiii.
ἀναστρ.
οἰκευμα.

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LV.

thus it reminds us of the country to which we belong as citizens. So the Apostle's words are not only deeply impressive, but should come home with vivid reality to the heart of every Englishman in India, who looks back with longing regret upon his native land. *Our country, our home, is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.* So wrote St Paul, when he was himself far from his own earthly home, separated from friends and kinsfolk, a prisoner at Rome, abased, afflicted, suffering need, desiring to depart Phil. i. 23, and to be with Christ, yet willing to abide in the ²⁴ *flesh* because it was needful for his brethren. We cannot doubt that his thoughts often wandered to the bright Mediterranean, on whose coast he had past his childhood, to *the hills round about Jerusalem*, Ps. cxxy. 2. which had been to him in his youth an ever present symbol of the Lord's protection. But all the love which he felt for Tarsus or for Palestine, all the natural longings with which he regarded those beautiful or sacred scenes of past happiness, were now transferred to heaven, which he felt to be his true home, the land of his spiritual birth, the country on which his hopes were permanently fixed. And the reason why he thus regards heaven as his country, is that from it *he looks for the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.* For Christ alone *is the Friend who stick-* Prov. xviii. *eth closer than a brother.* Earthly ties always must be ²⁴ and have been broken. In the Apostle's case no doubt they had been most rudely and utterly broken

- by his change of creed; but even where no such marked divergence of feelings and sympathies occurs, they must yield to a thousand causes of estrangement inseparable from this world's uncertainties, to human frailty, to long continued absence, to changes of occupation and interests, to the inevitable severance of death. But St Paul knew that from Christ's
- ROM. viii. 35. love nothing could sever him, *neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword:* for Christ had lived and died for him, and was now again *living for ever to make intercession for him.* Therefore where Christ was,
- HEB. vii. 25. the one Friend *with whom was no variableness neither shadow of turning,* there was his country: that place from which he expected Christ to come as his Saviour was his true home, the hope that he would one day be there with Christ for ever was his consolation for the severance of earthly ties, and for long and dreary absence from his earthly country. It is remarkable that when the apostles point our attention to heaven and the eternal future, they dwell far more frequently on Christ's second coming to judge the world than on the thought, more natural to us, because made familiar by solemn events daily occurring within our own experience, of each man's passage through the gate of death to the life beyond the grave. Now one reason for this may no doubt be found in the fact that the thought of the second advent turns our hearts more directly and personally to the Lord Jesus than the mere expect-

tation of death. For if we wish for a short and comprehensive statement of the apostles' object in all their preaching and writing, we can find none more true and more widely significant than this, that their aim was to make men love Christ. Therefore in speaking of eternity and heaven they identify them as it were with Christ; it is the light of His blessed guidance which illuminates the mysterious future, and leads us through the gloom of the dark valley which separates the seen from the unseen. Christ's promised return *from heaven, even as He was seen to go into heaven*, is the one event to which they looked forward with longing expectation; and with Him were bound up all their hopes and desires for the ages of eternity. So His presence in heaven made it their country, the goal of all their desires. Now, brethren, though the life of no one here can for a moment be compared with St Paul's labours and self-denial and sufferings for Christ's sake, yet thus far at least we may venture to liken our condition to his, that we are separated from the land of our early affections, we look back with natural longing to happy days and loved friends far away, we hope perhaps (and surely the wish is not forbidden by our merciful Father), that we shall once again look on the green fields and church towers and familiar landscapes of England. But absence, separation, change, uncertainty, should all impress us more deeply than if we had never left our homes with the need of a yet *better country*, and teach us, like St Paul, to

SERMON
LV.

Acts i. 11.

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LV. have *our conversation in heaven*. There should be our true England, the home of our tenderest affections, and most earnest efforts, and brightest hopes.

*Love of our
earthly and
of our hea-
venly coun-
try.*

2. Only we must remember that while we love our earthly country from the mere impulses of the heart, we cannot love our heavenly country except by the help of a deeper and holier principle than natural affection. For that love we must conquer ourselves, we must learn to hate sin, we must rise to a higher moral atmosphere than can be reached by our own unaided efforts. And in to-day's epistle St Paul warns us against some especial impediments to this love of heaven. He tells us that we are kept from it by indulging in any evil habit, and above all by falling under the yoke of sensual sin. This no doubt is the reason for the clause with which the text concludes. *Our citizenship is in heaven*, not only because we are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to come from it as our Saviour, and take us there to be happy with Himself for ever, but because *He will change this vile body*, or rather, as the expression should be rendered, *this body of our humiliation*, this body which pollutes us by its lusts and tempts us to sin, *that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body*, that body in which He has displayed His glory as our risen Lord, and will display it again as the Judge of all the earth. For this reflection, that the degrading indulgence of bodily passion unfits us for the love of heaven, is present

to the Apostle during the whole of his argument. SERMON
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Look back a few verses to the seventeenth (the beginning of to-day's epistle) and observe the connection of the text with the whole passage which precedes it.

3. *Brethren, he says, be followers together of me, Para-*
or rather, unite together as imitators of me, and ^{*phrase of*} *the epistle.*
copy with one consent the pattern which I set you, and ^{*Phil. iii. 17.*}
observe the conduct of those who are living in such
a manner as ye have an example in us. For the life 18.
of many, whom I used many times to mention to you,
when I was among you, but now mention even with
tears, (so deep is my grief at their unworthiness), is
such that they must be regarded as the enemies of the
cross of Christ. They are its enemies, because the
cross is the symbol of self-denial, and Christians are
called to "crucify the flesh with the affections and ^{*(Gal. v. 24.)*}
lusts," whereas these so-called Christians put no re- 19.
straint upon themselves, but their end is destruction at
the coming of the Lord, their god is their belly, their
glory is in practices and sins of which they should be
ashamed, their thoughts and wishes, bounded by the
things of earth, cannot rise to the love of God. But 20.
this must not be our spirit, for our country is not
upon earth, but exists in the heavens, from whence also
we are waiting for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,
who shall transform the body in which our humilia- 21.
tion is manifested, that it may be like unto the body in
which His glory is manifested, according to the work-
ing of His power, whereby He is able, besides manifest-

SERMON
LV.

1 COR. XV.
24.

*Consequences of
regarding
heaven as
our home.*

ing His glory, also to subdue all things, the universe, sin, death, "all rule and all authority and power," to Himself, as the Restorer of a fallen world.

4. Thus then, brethren, by surveying the whole passage of which the text forms a part, we learn to understand more accurately, and therefore I trust to use more devoutly, for our practical improvement, the declaration that *our conversation*, or rather *our country*, the commonwealth of which we are citizens, *is in heaven*. We see how closely connected it is with a personal love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore, I also trust, we feel something of shame that in our own hearts this love is so miserably lukewarm. We see too that this love to Christ, and this conviction that heaven is our home, are clouded by sin, especially by bodily sin, of all others the most debasing, the most sure to keep the soul from heavenward aspirations, and from spiritual communion with God. Let us in conclusion turn to some practical aspects of this most comforting truth that the Christian's home is in heaven. Every one who believes in it, and tries to realize it, and claim it for his own, must (i) make the laws of heaven his rule and guide; (ii) carry the thought of heaven with him in his heart; and (iii) find in the hope of heaven his consolation in trouble and disappointment.

*Obedience
to its laws.*

i. We must make the laws of heaven the guide of our conduct. Englishmen in a foreign land, who have any regard for their country's honour, are above all things careful to do nothing unworthy

its great name, nothing to cast discredit upon it, to violate those principles which are the glory of its citizens. And so, my brethren, it should be to the followers of Christ whose home is in heaven; wherever we may be placed on earth, we are more or less strangers and foreigners; exiles from the land of promise, the Canaan towards which our desires and aspirations should be turned. Let us endeavor to bring upon it no dishonour. Let the statutes of God's kingdom regulate our lives. Remember that if we are tarrying for the Lord Jesus Christ, if we love the prospect of His appearing, we must follow in His footsteps, for those only who are *Him shall see Him as He is*. We know that the 1 Joh. iii. hardy and unbelieving, the victims of anger, and ² passion, and sensual temptation, the deceitful, the worldly, shall be shut out from the heavenly Jerusalem, and have no claim to regard it as their native land. *There shall in no wise enter into it anything* Rev. xxi. *that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination,* ²⁷ *nor maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*. Beware then lest by yielding to worldly snares, you forfeit your place in the register of its citizens. Beware too of carelessness, and forgetfulness of your high calling. Think often of these solemn words, *he that overcometh shall inherit* Rev. xxi. *things*. We must never forget that the life of a citizen of heaven is a struggle and a warfare against sin, to be carried on by watchfulness and prayer.

SERMON
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*Love of hea-
ven.*

2 Cor. v. 7.
iv. 18.

Joh. xvii.
3^a

Rev. v.
xiv. xvi.

ii. Secondly, we must learn to carry the thought of heaven continually in our hearts. Exiles do not forget their home: the love of it, the hope of restoration to it, a fellow feeling with their countrymen, are ever present with them as the springs and motives of action. Just so we must be always influenced by the love of our heavenly country; we must think of it, realize its beauty and its glory, dwell in heart and affection on its manifold claims to our devotion, *walking by faith and not by sight, looking not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen.* Above all, when we thus try to make the thought of heaven a part of ourselves, we must never forget to connect the love of Jesus Christ with all our aspirations after rest and happiness. We have seen that His presence is the Christian's heaven; and so too the knowledge of Him and of His Father is life eternal. We must be content with but an inadequate conception of the glory and blessedness of that future home, which St John tries to picture to us by images drawn from marvellous scenes of natural beauty, transcendant visions of material architecture, and entrancing harmonies of earthly minstrels. We feel after all that such inspired descriptions are but condescensions to human infirmity, that no language of mortal man is competent to express the reality. But we can know and appreciate in some degree this one truth, that where Jesus Christ is, there must be peace and joy, and that the sight of Him will transform us into His likeness. Therefore if we are to

carry about with us in thought the love of heaven, we must be daily growing in the love of Christ. We must think of his earthly life, crowned and completed by His atoning death, as the great manifestation of the truth that *God is love*, and so must be encouraged to seek from Him pardon for every sin, and help in every difficulty. We must raise our hearts in faith to His present life in heaven, and look forward in hope to the day when He will come again to make us altogether His own. It is only by using the blessed privilege of communion with Him in prayer, that we can animate our cold hearts by Christian faith and hope and love.

SERMON
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1 Joh. iv.
8, 16.

iii. Lastly, we must find in the hope of heaven our strength and consolation. Of such consolation we must all have need, whatever be the differences in our present condition. To some of us, the regret for our earthly country is embittered by solitude, to others it is almost or altogether removed by the happiness of the home which God has given them here. But however blest any of us may be in friends, and family, and outward circumstances, none can pass through life, as it lengthens and draws to its close, without sharing the patriarch's retrospect, *Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage*. Here we must have sorrow: as we grow older we must feel more and more keenly that *the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now*. Let us then find strength and comfort under this world's inevitable trials by *waiting*

*Hope of
heaven our
comfort.*

Gen. xlvii.
9.

Rom. viii.
22.

SERMON LV. *for the manifestation of the sons of God.* Let separation, the loss of friends, bodily infirmity, earthly disappointment, be forgotten in the thought that *when*
 Rom. viii. 19. *Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.* Let us strive and pray for the *crown of righteousness* which the Lord *has laid up* for those who have past away before us, and for ourselves, and for those whom we shall leave behind, that He may thus unite again, in one glorious Communion of Saints, all those who *love His appearing*, and are clothed with His righteousness. Thus *desiring a better country, that is a heavenly*, we shall not love England less, or India less, or feel less grateful for any brightness which God in His mercy has shed upon our earthly home, but we shall know that there is something beyond it, that we are safe amidst the changes which must dim its happiness, or the storms which may at any time sweep it away; for our best hopes and
 2 Tim. iv. 8. affections will be surely fixed *on a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*
 Heb. xi. 16.

LVI. FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

COL. I. 3, 4, 5.

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.

WE must often have been struck by the frequent conjunction of faith, hope, and love in the writings of St Paul. They have been called the three Christian graces, the three theological virtues, the three principles of the spiritual life. They deserve the importance thus attached to them, for they are at once peculiar to the Gospel, and form the necessary foundation of all Christian excellence. I do not mean that they were unknown before Christ came, but they were first united and especially inculcated in the New Testament, because, without a Revelation from God to man, there is nothing to which faith can firmly attach itself, no promise to which hope may look for-

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*The three
moral prin-
ciples of
Christian-
ity.*

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ward, with undoubting confidence, no constraining motive for brotherly love. And from them all Christian excellence necessarily springs, because they are the connecting links as it were between the doctrines of the Gospel, and the life of practical holiness to which those doctrines lead. This is shewn to some extent by the few verses which follow the text, and have been chosen as to-day's epistle. It will therefore help us to understand the great subject before us, if we first rapidly paraphrase this epistle, and then consider the nature and results of these three principles of Christianity, Faith, Hope, and Love. It is true that by the word *hope* in this passage is meant, as we shall see, not so much the virtue of hope, as the thing hoped for, the object of hope; but this need not alter our application of it: if we keep the object hoped for by Christians steadily before us, hope as a Christian grace and practical principle will soon bear rule in our hearts.

Para-
phrase of
the epistle.

2. St Paul writes his letter to the Colossians in his own name and that of his companion Timotheus, who was now with him at Rome, rendering him help and solace during his imprisonment. And this accounts for the plural form of the passage before us.
- Col. i. 3. *We, that is, Timotheus and I, give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for*
4. *you, ever since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus,*
 - and of the love which for His sake you bear to all
 5. *Christians on account of the common hope which is laid up for you and all who share your faith in*

heaven, as you formerly were taught in the word of truth preached to you in the Gospel, which has been brought to you and is now present with you, even as it is also in the whole known world, and is bearing fruit and increasing everywhere, as it is also among you, since the day when you first heard of it, and came to the knowledge of the grace of God, in its true and unadulterated form, with no perverse additions from unauthorized teachers. And this was the manner in which you were taught it by Epaphras, our dear fellow bondman in the service of the Lord, who is a faithful minister of Christ in your behalf, and who also told us of the brotherly love which prevails among you under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day when we heard this account of you, do not cease to pray for you, and to make our petition that you may be filled with the thorough knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding; that your manner of life may be worthy of the Lord so that you may please Him in all things, in every good work bringing forth fruit and increasing by the knowledge of God, in every kind of strength being strengthened, in such measure as may be expected from the power of His glory, so as to shew forth all patience and long suffering with joy; and giving thanks unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who made us capable of sharing the inheritance of light and purity and perfection, which He has granted to His saints.

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LVI.

Summary
of its con-
tents.

3. We see now, my brethren, how the latter part

SERMON
LVI.

Col. iv. 12.
Philemon
23. per-
haps the
same as
Epaphrodi-
tus, Phil.
ii. 25.

of this passage teaches us the effect produced by the three great Christian virtues when they are rooted in a man's heart. St Paul had been informed of the faith, love, and hope of the Colossians by Epaphras, who was their countryman, apparently¹ the founder of the Church among them, and who had now come from Colossæ to share the Apostle's imprisonment at Rome. On hearing that the essential principles of Christian life were recognized and flourishing among them, St Paul offers up his prayer that they may exert their living power by producing their legitimate fruits of wisdom, patience, abundance of good works, and the thankful devotion of the heart to God. Let us then, brethren, now trace the connection thus suggested to us; let us first consider faith, hope, and love as separate principles, then in their combination as the foundation of Christian morality; let us afterwards glance at their natural results, and finally, let us consider how they should influence our whole lives.

Faith.

4. i. With regard to the first of them, Faith, it is not too much to say that every really high-minded and heroic deed has sprung from some form or other of this principle, from faith in something unseen, something nobler than man's own immediate interests, something pure and unselfish, either from trust and confidence in God, or in a good and holy cause. Even in heathen times, this principle, often in the shape of the love of country, or devotion to duty, has

¹ Alford's Greek Testament, *Prolegomena* to Vol. III. p. 35.

shed gleams of glorious light on the dreary record of human wickedness, and proved that man, though fallen, was not lost beyond recovery, since the Gentiles could still *shew the work of the law written in their hearts*. But it will be better to remind you that faith, in its simplest and most general sense, is the principle which animated the noble army of saints and martyrs recorded in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. Faith, as there explained, is that by which the object of hope is already present, by which man is convinced of the reality of what his senses cannot perceive. It is faith in God; trust in His promises generally, not as yet specific faith in a Redeemer. Through this faith, *Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house*; and Abraham went out at God's command from his own country, *not knowing whither he went*; and Moses chose rather *to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*; and the heroes and prophets of the Jewish Church *subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, bore afflictions, and now compass us round as a cloud of witnesses*, encouraging us by their example to *run with patience the race that is set before us*. But then the true Object of Faith was only partially revealed, whereas now we are no longer left to a general confidence that God will bring out good from evil, but are bidden to *look to Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith*, as our Leader who, by going before us in

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Rom. ii. 15.

Heb. xi. 1.

xi. 7.

xi. 8.

xi. 25.

xi. 33 ff.

xii. 1.

xii. 2.

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LVI. faith, has shewn us its true nature, and as our Per-
fector, the Giver of perfect salvation to them that

2 Cor. v. 7. obey Him. He teaches us how to *walk by faith and not by sight*; for, in spite of our sins, we may look to His death for forgiveness; in spite of the low and worldly principles and motives which abound within us and around us, we may look to His past life on earth as the standard at which to aim, and in spite of our miserable weakness, we may look to His present life in heaven as the source of spiritual strength and comfort. This is Christian faith, the same principle as that which has led patriots to die for their country, and reformers to rebuke an evil generation, and the patriarchs and prophets and pious kings of the Old Testament to proclaim God's will with boldness, and obey it in all things, but which is now centred on the Person of the Lord Jesus, derives from Him all spiritual nourishment, looks to Him for guidance, and
Joh. vi. 33. feeds on Him *as the Bread of God, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

Hope. ii. Hope also is a natural principle, acknowledged and honoured before Christ came, but now sanctified by Him and fixed upon a sure foundation. Hope, like faith, was often a motive which spurred men to great deeds even in heathen times: they fought, conquered, and died in hope of immortal fame. In the same manner, though resting on no vague impulses of their own hearts, but on a divine though partial revelation, Abraham *looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*, and Moses had
Heb. xi. 10.
xi. 26.

respect unto the recompence of the reward. But now new guarantees are given to strengthen and confirm our hope. The consciousness of the love of God, revealed to us in the Gospel, contains the security for its certain fulfilment. Christ, by His Resurrection, has given a pledge of ours, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The *city which hath foundations*, towards which Abraham looked in truthful but vague expectation, is revealed to us as *the heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the first born*, where *God will wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.* The true Christian is assured that all his sorrow for his own sins and shortcomings, or for the miseries and wrongdoings of others, will be quieted, all his holiest aspirations satisfied, his visions of reformation accomplished, his heart's deepest and best desires realized, in *the rest which remaineth for the people of God.* Animated by this glorious hope, we shall work on heartily in loving obedience to His will, seeking now in our lives to anticipate heaven, and sure that *He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will with Him also freely give us all things.*

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Heb. xii.

^{22, 23.}

Rev. xxi.

Heb. iv. 9.

Rom. viii.

^{32.}

iii. Nor is it less clear that love or charity, by *Love*, which two expressions our translators have rendered the same original word, is a principle of our nature adopted by Christianity, and transformed from a human affection into a divine grace. By the know-

SERMON ledge of the love of God manifested in our redemption, the germ of love which exists in the heart is enabled to expand into communion with the Redeemer, it is glorified and intensified by His love, and so it develops into an earnest fellow feeling for all whom He has redeemed, who are partakers of the like promises with ourselves, and who are united with us as our brethren through His blood shed upon the cross for the salvation of the world. We feel
LVI. and realize the truth of His saying, that *if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*: and thus, in the true Christian's estimation, the love of God and love of the brethren are united by an inseparable tie.

The three together.

5. Such then, brethren, are the three leading principles of Christian morals, considered separately; now let us view them in their combination. It is plain that they are very closely akin. They are constantly spoken of together. *We give thanks to God always for you all*, says St Paul to the Thessalonians, *remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*. They seem to rest one upon the other, and one uses the other for its agents. Faith is described as *the substance of things hoped for*, and is also said to *work by love*. Thus hope is the foundation of faith, and faith gives confidence to hope, and love is the instrument by which faith operates. The faith *which worketh by love* could not persevere in its efforts and its conflict with evil within and without,

1 Joh. iv.
11.

1 Thess. i.
3.

Heb. xi. 1.
Gal. v. 6.

unless the certain prospect of ultimate triumph were assured by the distinct promises of God. And faith would sink into a mere superstition, a mere dread of evil, such as prompts the natives of our Indian mountains to propitiate wicked spirits by sacrifices and prayers, unless it longed for communion with God, and was grieved by estrangement from Him, and thus, penetrated and purified by His love, poured forth its own living stream of active self-sacrificing love towards all His children. So again this love is supported and animated by hope. We see this in the passage before us. St Paul has heard of the love which the Colossians entertain to all the saints, *for*, that is, on account of, *the hope which is laid up for them in heaven*. That is, their love was quickened and strengthened by the thought that they were fellow heirs of the same promises, and would share the same home for all eternity. It did not expect any earthly return, but rested on the sure prospect of *the things which God has prepared for them that love Him*. And yet once more as faith is spiritualized and christianized by love, so also is hope, for as we truly believe, in the Christian sense, only in Him whom we love, so likewise we only hope, with the Christian longing of the devout heart, for that which we love¹.

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1 Cor. ii. 9.

6. We see then that these three principles are *Their results*. inextricably interwoven, and it will now be easy for

¹ See Sermon XVI. Vol. I. p. 197

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us to understand, from what has already been said, that they are also the source of the whole Christian life. Take for example to-day's epistle, and consider what are the graces which St Paul regards as their natural result and development. Wisdom, that is divine wisdom, the full knowledge of God, and spiritual understanding, the power of applying that knowledge to all the difficulties and perplexities which beset the Christian's path, and choosing rightly between conflicting duties or in doubtful questions; both these plainly result from a true faith in Christ *working by love*, not only because such faith has the promise of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the mind, but also because it purifies the heart from those distracting influences of selfishness and passion, which always incline us to that line of conduct which is most agreeable, rather than that which is our duty. Patience too, and perseverance, and long suffering, are the practical results of faith and hope. We are nerved to do and to suffer all that God requires of us, and are animated and supported in our life-long labour by the thought of what He has done for us already, and of the *crown of righteousness* reserved for *those who love His appearing*. And thus, in the truest and highest sense, we

² Tim. iv.
8.

Gain from past and future skill
To bear and to forbear ;

and we carry on heartily and resolutely the life-long labour of struggling against our evil nature, and ful-

filling God's holy will. Hence St Paul uses patience and hope in the closest connection, as when he bids us to be *rejoicing in hope and patient in tribulation*; nay, sometimes he seems to substitute one term for the other, as where he praises his converts for their *patience and faith*, instead of employing the more usual combination, faith and hope. You have heard perhaps, brethren, that some of the ancient philosophers, who before Christ came were vainly struggling to help men to be righteous, selected four principles to form the grand outlines of moral character. These four, which they called the four cardinal virtues, were wisdom, justice, fortitude and temperance. All these are realized, or rather far more than realized, by the three graces of the Christian scheme. We have seen that faith is the source of wisdom, faith and hope of fortitude and temperance, including all kinds of self-restraint, humility, meekness, unselfishness, the sacrifice of our own high thoughts and passionate desires. And justice is but a poor inadequate substitute for love, for love teaches us to give to every man not only his due, but more than his due, since we are taught to acknowledge that every obligation must be discharged, except one which can never be discharged, and that we must *owe no man anything, but to love one another*. Thus then in its moral teaching, as well as in its other revealed doctrines, Christianity has more than satisfied the natural yearnings and aspirations of the human conscience.

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Rom. xii.

12.

2 Thess. i.

4

Rom. xiii.

8.

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*Their influence over
our whole
lives.*

7. And now I only desire to utter a concluding protest against the error of supposing that these three cardinal virtues of the Gospel are needed only for the greater struggles of life, and not for our ordinary every day duties as citizens, neighbours, members of families, men and women working on, each in the station in which God has placed us. We have been speaking of the heroes of faith, of those who were strengthened by hope to courage and endurance, and of the love which we owe to God for the infinite blessing of our Redemption. We may think that our duties are too commonplace and obvious to require the support of these cardinal principles of the Christian life. Brethren, it is not so. In our common work and perplexities, in providing for the wants of the present and the future, in buying and selling, as parents, children, friends, employers, and employed, we must be guided by Faith, Hope, and Love. They alone, developed and strengthened by the Spirit of God, will reduce the vulgar chaos of our daily life, our self-seeking, our littleness and perversity, to a harmony worthy of Him whose Name we bear. They are the eternal, universal remedies for every moral disorder. So says St Paul once more: *now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.* They abide for ever: in the midst of the changes and chances of this mortal life they are our sure foundation, and even when this life is over, they still remain as the sources of our happiness in heaven. For though it

¹ Cor. xiii.
13.

might seem that then faith would be swallowed up in sight, and hope in enjoyment, yet faith will still be there as a holy confidence in God, and hope will be ever looking forward to constantly increasing revelations of divine wisdom. But then, as now, love will be acknowledged as the greatest of the three, for as even in this world faith and hope without love are dead and worthless, so in the next it is still love, then fully satisfied by the actual vision of God, which will give to faith and hope their value, and supply them with their true life and happiness.

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HOPETOWN, HIMALAYAS, 1862.

LVII. THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

JER. XXIII. 5, 6.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.

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*Peculiari-
ty in the
selection of
the epistle.*

IN choosing this portion of Scripture for to-day's epistle, the framers of our Liturgy have deviated from their usual practice. For one Sunday in the year, and for one only, that part of our service is not selected from the New Testament. On this last Sunday after Trinity, the Sunday immediately before Advent, our attention is diverted from the doctrines and practical precepts of Christianity as set forth by Christ's apostles, to one of the ancient predictions that He should come to save the world. Instead of listening to the warnings, the exhortations, the ripe Christian experience of St Paul, St John, St Peter, or St James, we are strengthened by the

words of inspired comfort with which the prophet Jeremiah consoled his countrymen in their day of trial and disaster. For it was designed that at this season of the Christian year our thoughts should be specially turned to the great subject of our Lord's coming, and that we should begin to ask ourselves what help and encouragement we derive from the fact that He has come already, how far our lives are influenced and improved by the hope of His return.

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2. It was in the very gloomiest period of Jewish history that Jeremiah uttered the great prediction to which the Church directs our attention to-day. It is taken from the 23rd chapter of his prophecies, but the discourse of which it forms a part extends from the beginning of the 21st to the end of the 24th. If you turn to the former, you will find that Zedekiah, the last and basest of the kings of Judah, terrified at the sight of the Chaldæan² army already collected under the walls of Jerusalem, sent messengers to the prophet, whom he permitted at other times to be persecuted and imprisoned, to ask whether God would once more deliver His chosen people, and *deal with them according to the wondrous works*, by which He had so often rescued their fathers from perils as great as those which now encompassed themselves. Jeremiah replied by a solemn denunciation both of the political and religious guides of the people, first of their kings, briefly surveying the history and miserable fate of the last three, and then of their prophets. He tells them that God will

Shallum or
Jehoahaz,
Jer. xxii.
11.
Jehoiakim,
xxii. 18.

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Coniah or
Jehoiachin,
xxii. 24.
Prophets,
xxiii. 1, 2.
Jer. xxi. 4,
5.

no longer overlook their iniquities, or save them from the vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar. On the contrary, he is commissioned to utter these stern and sorrowful words. *Thus saith the Lord God of hosts; behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city: and I will myself fight against you with an outstretched hand, and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.* That wicked generation must drain the cup of punishment to the dregs, that city of Jerusalem, now stained by countless crimes, even that temple, once loved and honoured, but now utterly polluted, must perish from off the face of the earth. But still God had not forgotten His gracious promises, the blessings of which that age had shewn itself unworthy were still reserved for a happier time, the determination that Messiah should come and restore all things remained fixed in the counsels of God, there was yet in store for His people a mightier deliverance than the rescue of their fathers from Egyptian slavery. These few words of consolation and encouragement, uttered in the midst of the sternest rebukes and gloomiest threats, are chosen for our consideration to-day. After denouncing woe against the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of God's pasture, the prophet suddenly changes his tone and announces a message of comfort and mercy.

3. Behold, the days are coming, saith the Lord, SERMON LVII.
 when I will raise up to the house of David a righteous Para-
 Branch, or Offspring, a fresh shoot from the tree which phrase.
 seems now to be utterly withered, and He shall reign Jer. xxiii.
 as a King and prosper, and execute judgement and 5.
 justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be freed 6.
 from sorrow, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this
 is His new Name whereby in those happier days a
 thankful people shall call Him, The Lord is our
 Righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days are com- 7.
 ing, saith the Lord, when in oaths and judicial pro-
 ceedings men shall no longer say, As the Lord is
 living, (or, By the life of the Lord), who brought up
 the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, (which
 was the usual form of solemn asseveration among
 the Jews before the Babylonish captivity), but By the 8.
 life of the Lord, who brought up and led the seed of
 the house of Israel out of the North country, that land
 of Chaldæa into which this generation must be exiled,
 and out of all the other countries whither I have
 driven them at various times, and they shall dwell in
 their own land. A greater deliverance than that from
 Egypt shall be commemorated and held in perpetual
 remembrance as God's chief and crowning mercy.

4. Such were the comforting words by which Applica-
 Jeremiah sought to raise the hearts of his despairing tion of the
 countrymen from the pain of present suffering to passage to
 the hope of future glory. And now, brethren, let ourselves.
 us remember that though originally spoken to the
 messengers of a Jewish king, yet they are words

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Joh. xi.
52.

of eternal significance, intended for us even more than for Zedekiah and his people, and fixing on us a deeper responsibility than theirs. For their promise, if not entirely, is at least partially fulfilled. The deliverance of which the Hebrew prophet spoke has been begun. The Branch of the house of David has blest the earth by His presence, and lived and died for the salvation not of Judah and Israel only, *but that He might gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad.* And now while for a time He is absent from us, the work which He commenced is to be carried on by us who call ourselves by His Name. We are to continue it till He permits us to rest from our toil; successive generations are to take it up, each improving on their fathers' work, till He Himself comes again to complete it, and to judge the world which He redeemed. Now in Jeremiah's promise of a Deliverer to Israel, three points are worthy of our close attention: (i) that trust in Him was held out as an encouragement in time of difficulty; (ii) that He was announced as bearing a new Name; and (iii) that He was proclaimed to be a King. Let us bring the subject home to our hearts by asking ourselves whether we lift them up to Christ in these three characters, as our Consoler, as the Lord our Righteousness, and as our King; whether we come to Him in trouble, realize the full meaning of His Name, and appreciate the blessings of His government.

*Christ our
comfort in
trouble.*

i. We have seen that the prophecy was spoken as a consolation to God's people in the hour of dark-

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est despondency. When it seemed that the last hope for their nation was over, that in a few months or weeks the city which God had chosen must perish, and the last sad remnant be added to the crowd of exiles already driven into the north country, this new hope was opened by His inspired messenger. Sorrow was now pressing heavily upon them: neither the faithfulness of the few who had not deserted the Lord, nor the repentance of the rebellious mass, could avert the present judgement: but still this judgement was not to be for ever, the promised Redeemer would not fail them, a day would come *when Judah should be saved and Israel should dwell safely*, under a Branch of the royal house. now unworthily represented by the craven Zedekiah. Brethren, in our times of trouble, whether they are the result of our own negligences and misdeeds, or part of the general inheritance of sorrow which man's sin has brought into the world, we also must derive strength and confidence from the consolations that are in Christ Jesus. Remember that we can apply to ourselves fuller assurances and more glorious promises than those which Jeremiah spoke to the Jews. His words, blessed as they are, point wholly to the future, and almost sink into weak and imperfect utterances when compared with those spoken by the Branch of whom he prophesied. Jeremiah could assure his fainting countrymen that a great salvation would be, Christ has told them that it has been and that it is. *In the world ye shall have tribulation*, He says, *but* ^{Joh. xvi. 33.} *I will* ^{xiv. 18.} *be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

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- xiv. 14. *not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you. If ye shall ask anything in my Name, I will do it; I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.*
 xiv. 16. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. I go and prepare a place for you...I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.*
 xiv. 27. *Such are some of the promises on which we may rest in all times of doubt and trouble, when we are tempted to distrust God's fatherly care, or think that our own sins are too many and too perverse to be forgiven. Unless this faith in Christ is a real help and protection to us, our Christian profession is but an unmeaning name. Unless Christ comes to us by His Spirit with help and blessing, His past and future coming in the body are alike unprofitable to us, we cannot look back upon the one as the source of forgiveness and redemption, nor forward to the other as our exceeding great reward. Faith in Him must be to the Christian a matter of personal experience, a life, a principle, pervading his whole character, and guiding him especially at those times when he needs a surer help than any earthly friend can give.*
 xiv. 2. *ii. And this leads us from the general promise that such a Helper and Protector should come to the particulars revealed to us of His character. His character is exprest by His Name. This is His Name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. As Jeremiah declared this to be His cha-*
 3-

*The Name
here given
to Christ.*

racter before He came, so St Paul accepts and confirms it, after He had come, by telling us that *Christ Jesus is made unto us by God wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* We are designed to learn from this Name at least two great truths. First, that Christ is our Righteousness, because through His righteousness only we are forgiven and accepted by God. This lesson is expanded by St Paul in another passage, of which this phrase *The Lord our Righteousness* may be regarded as the germ. *We are justified*, he says, *freely through God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* This then is the first truth contained in this Name of Christ, that His righteousness has atoned for our sin and reconciled us to our Father. And the second truth is that those who call Jesus Christ by the Name of *The Lord our Righteousness*, must seek from Him not only forgiveness but holiness, not only deliverance from the punishment of sin, but also from its power. We must not merely look to Christ's righteousness as the ground of our pardon: if our heavenly Father graciously consents to regard us as righteous for Christ's sake, we must seek also to become righteous according to Christ's pattern. Here again St Paul shall be our commentator on the ancient prophet. *Put ye*

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1 Cor. i. 30.

Rom. iii.
25 ff.Rom. xiii.
14.

SERMON on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for
LVII the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. Be clothed with

Christ's character, and not with the fulfilment of
fleshly lusts and degrading passions. And again in
Phil. ii. 5. another place, *Let this mind be in you which was also
in Christ Jesus*, the mind of humility and meek obedience to God's will. When we accept, as our Saviour and Captain, One who bears the Name of *The Lord our Righteousness*, we must not be content with weak efforts and vague aspirations and the appearance of goodness, but must seek for a righteousness which is really divine, a purity like the purity of Christ. We must find real ground for help and consolation in the two great truths, that we
Tit. iii. 5. are forgiven, *not for works of righteousness which we have done*, and which could never deserve forgiveness, but for the righteousness of Christ, and that this same righteousness is our example and our guide.

*Christ's
Kingdom.*

iii. And lastly, this Redeemer whom Jeremiah promised under the Name of The Lord our Righteousness is also revealed to us as a King and the Founder of a kingdom. The nature of this kingdom, and of His government, is implied in the Name of the King, and is yet further explained in the text: *in His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: He shall execute judgement and justice upon earth.* Observe especially these words *upon earth*, and interpret them, as they are meant to be interpreted, quite literally. We are far too apt to limit Christ's work to vague and shadowy conceptions of

a distant paradise. And doubtless one chief end of His coming was to bring life and immortality to light, to teach us to have our conversation in heaven, to loosen the bands of death. But this was not the whole of His mission. He also came to redeem and bless this world in which we are now living. *The Lord our Righteousness* has founded a righteous kingdom, in which there is safety not for Judah and Israel only, but for all nations in all times who repose beneath the protection of Christ's Church, the true Israel of God. This safety in its highest sense is only bestowed on those who are actually within the fold, citizens of the Redeemer's kingdom; but here in India it is necessary to remember that there must also be safety for others who are brought into an outward and, as it were, casual connection with it, who, in the course of God's providence, are governed, in earthly things, by His spiritual Israel. They should all be enabled to see clearly that a kingdom of righteousness is in truth set up among them, that the rule of judgement and justice is established in their land. And as to its actual citizens, they all, whatever be the rank and calling of each, from the highest to the lowest, statesmen, soldiers, merchants, tradesmen, mechanics, in all their dealings with each other, public and private, must acknowledge Christ's Gospel to be their rule, a law supreme over all laws. As the faithful subjects of a heavenly King, we are bound, brethren, to strengthen the foundations and extend the limits of His government, so that our daily petition, *Thy kingdom come, may*

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no longer be an empty sound. In spite of the temptations of selfishness and passion, and of the desire of earthly prosperity, in spite too of trouble, contradiction, perhaps misrepresentation and calumny, we must do our utmost to change *the kingdoms of the world into the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ*. Let these then, brethren, be our Advent thoughts, with which we end one Christian year and begin another. Let these be the lessons which we learn from having contemplated, in the long services of Sundays and holy days which the Church annually unfolds to us, Christ's holy Nativity and Circumcision, His Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, His Agony and Bloody Sweat, His Cross and Passion, His precious Death and Burial, His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. For through this painful course of doing and suffering, He who is the Son of God and the Son of Man was made *The Lord our Righteousness*, the Founder of a kingdom which shall unite earth and heaven, time and eternity. And in the strength and confidence derived from Him we must work on humbly and faithfully now, looking forward to that *blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*.

AKTAR, 1861.

END OF VOLUME II.

CAMBRIDGE: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.



